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Why Christians Believe the Doctrine of Future Everlasting Punishment.

A SERMON

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Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come . . . I said, therefore, unto you that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins.—John viii: 21, 24.

How do we account for the fact that the future everlasting punishment of those who die impenitent and unforgiven has been firmly held and strenuously defended by the great majority of Christians in every age? The doctrine is confessedly awful and repulsive. It has been assailed by every weapon of ridicule, of denunciation and of argument. It has been stigmatized as unreasonable, cruel and dishonoring to God. They who teach it have been held up to public scorn as "narrow-minded bigots," "heartless theologians," "Pharasaic dogmatists." Christianity itself has often been rejected because of it. And yet after eighteen centuries of investigation, discussion and controversy, this confessedly offensive and horrible doctrine enters as an essential element into the creed of the whole Christian Church, of the Greek, of the Latin, and of all the great historical Protestant bodies. It underlies and pervades, in some form, the religious experience, the hymnology and the liturgies of the great mass of Christians. Its opponents among professing Christians belong exclusively to one of two classes—those who refuse to adopt any definite statements of religious belief, or those who are confessedly out of sympathy with the denominations to which they belong. The doctrine of future punishment is one of the points in regard to which there is no characteristic difference between Roman Catholics and Protestants. As it prevailed in the Church before the rise of the Romish hierarchy, so also it was not brought into question when the Reformation struck off the chains of priestly power, and led men in the free exercise of the right of private judgment to the study of the Scriptures. Upon this subject there is a unanimous and absolute agreement among

all the Lutheran and Reformed creeds. While they reject the comparatively modern dogma of purgatory (which is nothing more nor less than the theory that God's wrath in the next world will purify some of those who are not sanctified and saved from sin by His grace in this), they reaffirm the ancient faith of the Church in future everlasting punishment. The popular notion that this doctrine has some peculiar connection with the Presbyterian Church, or at least with what is called the Calvinistic system, is utterly groundless. Two facts will demonstrate the truth of this remark. The Protestant Episcopal Church in this country and in England, while they reject our Presbyterian polity, declare their faith in this doctrine in unequivocal terms; every time they repeat the venerable Litany, which contains this solemn petition, "From wrath and everlasting damnation, good Lord deliver us." Do they play the hypocrite before God when they thus pray to Him? Certainly not. Does Canon Farrar use the Litany? We presume he does. On the other hand, the whole Methodist denomination, while they reject what are called Calvinistic doctrines, preach future punishment with their characteristic zeal.

Now, how do we account for this tenacity of belief in a doctrine so unpopular and so repulsive to the human heart? Shall we attribute it, as one of the most eloquent of the modern opposers does, to "angry ignorance or raging prejudice?" Surely orthodox theologians are not a whit behind the chiefest of their opposers in the study of Biblical criticism, nor in their ability both to appreciate and to use whatever can move the heart and convince the understanding. Or, shall we accept the more telling and popular explanation, and believe that the great body of the theologians and Christian people in all ages have been so blinded and hardened by hatred towards their fellow-men that the thought of the perdition of others enhances the anticipation of their own blindness, and that they "consign multitudes, with orthodox equanimity, to endless torments?" Does the strength of this doctrine consist in the *delight* it affords those who hold it? We are ashamed to ask such questions. We blush for those who make it when we repeat the suggestion that the great body of the fathers and of the reformers, the overwhelming majority of all who have ever preached the gospel since the days of the apostles—including the authors of the sweetest melodies that have ever embodied Christian love in songs, such as, "Jesus thou joy of loving hearts;" "Rock of ages cleft for me;" "Jesus lover of my soul;" "There is a fountain filled with blood;"—that all these were monsters of cruelty, to whose hearts the thought of another's suffering brought exquisite pleasure. If this were true, then, indeed, would Christianity be a failure, and Nero, when he sought to stamp it out of the world, would be a model of virtue com-

pared with its most honored saints. But let us have done with such senseless reviling; it is neither philosophic, nor charitable, nor truthful. As a joke, it is ghastly; as an argument, beneath contempt. They who believe the doctrine of future everlasting punishment are quite as loving in their spirit as they who reject it. The weakest of all ways to assail a doctrine is to impeach the motives and traduce the character of those who hold it. Let us have done with this slandering of the living and the dead—this trampling on the graves of our fathers. Let all—whatever be their views upon this subject—cease to make the wrath to come a theme for merriment. This world is full enough of subjects for innocent and wholesome laughter without turning the destinies of eternity or the opinions of men concerning them into ridicule. To do this is not only a profanity but an intellectual degradation. Let us acknowledge the sincerity of those from whom we are constrained to differ upon this as upon other subjects. There can be no reasonable doubt that, on all sides of this vexed question, it would bring an infinite relief and give universal satisfaction if we could be assured that all mankind will be ultimately and eternally blessed. It is no comfort to us to think with Paul, that, after having preached to others, we ourselves “may be a castaway,” or that any to whom we have preached may “fail of the grace of God.”

Why then do we not all agree to reject the doctrine of future punishment and abolish it forever from our creed? There are two obstacles in the way, two insurmountable facts, which account for the prevalence of the doctrine, and make it just as impossible to eliminate it from Christian belief as it is to vote pain out of the world, or to abolish poverty and sickness by acts of Congress.

In the first place the doctrine of future and everlasting punishment is in accordance with the suggestions of the human conscience, and with the constitution and course of nature which all Christians call divine Providence. Forbodings of wrath to come are as instinctive and as universal among men as a belief in God and in the immortality of the soul. It is a doctrine of natural as well as of revealed religion, and it is abundantly confirmed by the analogies between the two. It is not peculiar to the Christian system. It lies at the basis of all religion; and from its awful warnings and anticipations no relief has ever been found but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ; unless that may be called a relief which rejects all religion and lapses into the denial of both God and the human soul.

If men suffer—and suffer remedilessly for sin in this life, under the government of a merciful and holy God, no satisfactory reason can be assigned why they may not so suffer in another state of existence, and in the face of existing facts, no speculation of uninspired men can argue out of the human soul

those forebodings of wrath to come which the gospel so far from removing, has only confirmed in the great majority of those who accept it. Every argument against these natural forebodings founded upon an appeal to the divine Attributes, is equally good against the very existence of the divine government over this world; and if carried out to its logical conclusion must lead to the denial of the being of God. It is very easy to beg the question in dispute by passionate appeals to God's justice and benevolence. Assuming that they have all the elements of a righteous judgment within their grasp, and that they are just as competent as God Himself to decide what the doom of those who die impenitent ought to be, men jump at once to the still grosser assumption that the teaching of the universal conscience of mankind, confirmed by what the great majority of Christians have always accepted as the plain meaning of Scripture, impeaches the divine justice; and then they ask, with eloquent deprecations, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" As though some one were endeavoring to prove that the Judge of all the earth will do wrong! The very question to be decided is, What in God's judgment, who alone is competent to decide, will be the just doom for incorrigible sinners? And the only answer to that question, aside from Scripture, is found in what He does in this world, and what the accusing conscience forbodes that He will do in the next. Abraham once asked, in a very different spirit from those who quote his words, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" And the answer was not what the patriarch pleaded for, but the storm of fire and brimstone that blotted out the doomed cities of the plain. And so all through the history of the world the human conscience has recognized and interpreted the fact that "the wrath of God has been revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." And this appeal to natural justice as against the everlasting punishment of the wicked is still more grossly inconsistent with the very idea of such a remedial system as the gospel. "If it be inconsistent with divine justice that men should perish for their sins, then redemption is not a matter of grace or undeserved mercy. Deliverance from an unjust penalty is a matter of justice. Nothing, however, is plainer from the teaching of Scripture, and nothing is more universally and joyfully acknowledged by all Christians than that the whole plan of redemption—the mission, the incarnation and the death of the Son of God for the salvation of sinners—is a wonderful exhibition of the love of God which passes knowledge. But if justice demand that all men shall be saved, then salvation is a matter of justice; and all the songs of gratitude and praise from the redeemed, whether in heaven or on earth, ought at once to cease."—*Hodge*.

And you will readily see that the question of justice is not

in anywise affected by the *number* of the lost. All that has been said about the multitudes who may be supposed to have perished, and especially all that has been falsely attributed to the orthodox doctrine on this point, is a mere befogging of the question. It is as truly inconsistent with the divine perfection, and with all that makes the character of God attractive, to suppose that He would unjustly punish one soul as to suppose that He would inflict a similar sentence upon millions. Nor is the appeal to divine benevolence more logical or conclusive. As the question of numbers is especially irrelevant when applied to the justice, so the question of time or duration is irrelevant as regards benevolence. If God's benevolence necessitates the ultimate and complete happiness of all, that necessity is just as binding now as it ever will be; for the whole argument is based upon the assumption that God's benevolence, being infinite, must have an infinite expression—in other words, that He must make all men as happy as they can be. But we know that all men are not happy here; nay, we know that no man is as happy as he is capable of being. If it be answered that God cannot make all men perfectly blessed here consistently with His own perfections and with the interests of the universe, and with the very nature of the human soul, that nullifies the whole argument; for who beside God Himself is competent to say that the same conditions may not limit the exercise of infinite benevolence in a future state? So that the consideration of the moral attributes of God as they are illustrated in His providence over this world, instead of overturning the doctrine of future punishment, is, in fact, one strong reason why it has always been believed. The argument from the analogy between the constitution and course of nature and the teaching of revealed religion on this subject is fully stated by Bishop Butler, and never has been answered, except by an utter denial of a divine moral government over the universe.

The second reason why the doctrine of future punishment has been so universally and tenaciously held is found in the teaching of Scripture, and especially in the recorded instructions of our Lord Jesus Christ, to which we propose now entirely to confine ourselves. It is very remarkable that all the strongest expressions in which the common belief in future punishment is embodied, or by which it is illustrated—all the expressions which are most frequently ridiculed and reviled by unbelievers—fell originally from the lips of Christ Himself. Whatever "the worm that dieth not" and "the fire that is not quenched" may signify—whatever is meant by being "bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth"—these and many similar expressions descriptive of the destiny of men after death are

not the inventions of theologians, but the two-edged words of Him who spoke as never man spake. It was He who related the story of a certain rich man who, after the sumptuous fare of this life, lifted up his eyes, being in torment, and begged in vain for a drop of water to cool his tongue. Five times in one discourse, when exhorting us to the self-denial which He declares to be necessary to salvation, He enforces His precepts by warning us that we are in danger of being cast into hell fire, into the fire that is not quenched, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched. Does any one say this is horrible? So we think it is. But it was the loving and compassionate Saviour who said it, and said it with a full understanding of the common belief of the Jews in His day in regard to future everlasting punishment, and with a full knowledge that His words would be received, in their obvious and natural sense, as an endorsement and confirmation of that doctrine.

And now, when men rail at His ministers as cruel and malignant, and delighting in human suffering, because they simply repeat His words, we repel the accusation, not as against ourselves, but as well suited to dishonor and villify the character of Jesus Christ. We do not impute to them any such purpose. But when they denounce Augustine, and Calvin, and the Reformers, and the Puritan fathers for receiving and repeating these words of Christ, we feel sure that their censures, in the apprehension of impenitent and unbelieving men, pass over from the servants at whom they are aimed and wound the Master in the house of His friend.

Nor can the force of this observation be evaded by the assertion that it is not the words of Christ against which these railing accusations are brought, but only the interpretation which theologians have put upon them. For it is further remarkable that the doctrine of future punishment, as held and taught by the Christian Church in all ages, does not and never has consisted in the *interpretation* of these expressions of the Saviour. Even the Roman Catholic Church has never undertaken, by any formulated creed, by the decree of any council, or by the promulgation of any authoritative dogma, to decide whether the fire unquenchable is to be literally or figuratively understood. And there is not a Protestant creed in Christendom which insists upon a material hell, or upon a literal acceptance of the Saviour's words descriptive of future punishment. All the Church and its creeds have ever insisted upon is that the words of Jesus Christ are *true*, and were *truthfully uttered*; that they represent not a fiction, but a reality; and that He uttered them, not to play upon the superstitious fears of the generation who heard Him, but to give a faithful warning to all generations of men concerning a real danger to which they are exposed. It is not the Church doctrine that

blindly adheres to the letter that killeth. That charge lies rather against the teaching of those who insist that the Saviour's words refer only to the Valley of Hinnom, from which His lurid imagery was drawn—where the worm *has* died and the fire has long since been quenched; and so they make His words self-contradictory and belittle the warnings, which were intended for all time and for all mankind, by restricting them to a generation and to a state of things which have long since passed away. Doubtless there has been a vast deal of wild speculation among theologians and preachers of every name. They have given a loose rein to their imagination in the attempt to describe the invisible and eternal world; they have attempted to set ajar the gates of both heaven and hell; they have enlarged upon and woven into new forms, and sought to intensify by additions of their own, the Bible descriptions both of everlasting punishment and of life eternal. But all this has nothing to do with the essence of Christian faith. No formulated creed, and, so far as we know, no theologian of acknowledged repute, has ever undertaken to decide whether the words of Christ about that Gehenna fire, which is *not* quenched, are to be received literally, or only as the symbols of a more profound spiritual reality. The absolute and everlasting truth of His teaching on this subject is not involved in this question of interpretation; nor would that truth be a whit less terrible to any thoughtful mind if we knew for a certainty that the quenchless flame is nothing more than the burning of perpetual remorse in the chambers of the lost soul itself. Among those who have insisted most earnestly upon this interpretation are to be found some of the ablest and most orthodox expounders of both Roman Catholic and Protestant theology.

Further than this, it is remarkable that in the judgment of the Christian Church, as expressed in its creeds and in the preaching of its ablest ministers, the doctrine of future punishment has never been based exclusively upon these peculiar expressions of the Saviour. It does not rest upon any set of words or phrases, nor upon a few isolated texts, but upon the broad declarations, and especially upon the underlying assumptions, of the whole Scripture. It is taken for granted in those very teachings of Christ, in which His doctrine shines as the light and distils as the dew, and brings home unspeakable comforts to the sinful and sorrowing heart. And because this doctrine is thus interwoven with the whole gospel it is so tenaciously held by Christians. This will account for what may be regarded as the intemperate zeal with which some have defended it. When men seem to advocate and defend future punishment as though their happiness depended upon the belief that others must perish, if you could look into their hearts you would see that it is the *integrity of their Saviour*

and the truth of the sweet promises of the gospel that they are vindicating. If He is not to be believed when He threatens everlasting punishment, neither is He trustworthy when He promises everlasting life, for the two things are spoken of in the same sentence, and their duration is described by the same word; as, for example, in the description of the judgment in the twenty-fifth chapter of Matthew. All through His teaching, the punishment is the dark back-ground on which the forgiveness and the salvation are portrayed with celestial brightness. And it is not by single words or sentences, but by the whole drift and tone of His teaching, that the doctrine is fastened upon the experimental belief of the soul. Suppose we admit that the word *Hell* is never used in the New Testament in connection with the idea of punishment, that it means only and always the general state of the dead as distinguished from the living, and that there is no other single word which definitely describes either a state or a place of future punishment; suppose we admit, also, that the word *damnation* ought to be translated *condemnation* always, as it is sometimes, and that the latter word has a meaning entirely different from the former; suppose, further, we concede that the word *aionios* does not mean everlasting; that there is no word in the Greek language to express the idea of endless duration; that the idea was unknown to the human mind in the days of Christ, and, consequently, that there is nothing in the Bible to assure us that heaven is everlasting, or that Jehovah is the Eternal God—suppose, I say, we concede all these monstrous assumptions, which have lately been put forth so dogmatically and with such an ostentation of profound scholarship; and to crown all these assumptions with one still more monstrous, let us suppose that the proposed new translation of the Bible will fully endorse all these new interpretations, and abolish the three obnoxious words, *hell*, *damnation* and *everlasting*, from the holy Scriptures: what then? Have you eliminated the doctrine of everlasting future punishment from the Bible, and especially from the teaching of Jesus Christ? Why, no! You might as well declare that a forest is destroyed when you have lopped off a branch or two from half a dozen trees; or that the ocean is turned into fresh water when you have extracted the salt from a few bucketfuls of its brine. What will you do, for example, with the Saviour's great commission to His disciples: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature: he that believeth shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned"

Now substitute the word "condemned" for "damned"; nay, to make the point still clearer, strike out the whole clause in which it stands, and let the only sanction to the great commission be, "he that believeth shall be saved." Does that mean he that believeth *not* shall be saved? Does it mean that

salvation is a mere imaginary good, which, in the long run, will constitute no essential difference between those who possess and those who possess it not? When the Saviour lays down the specific and unequivocal condition upon which men may be saved, does He reserve to Himself the knowledge of other conditions, which, if avowed, would completely nullify what He declares? Did He, indeed, know at the very time He gave this great commission that ultimately it will make little difference to men whether they hear and believe the gospel or not? How, then, can we receive Jesus Christ as an infallible, or even as a truthful, teacher? It must be obvious to every candid mind that what is assumed in that commission is an essential part of His teaching, and that to suppress the truth under such circumstances is no better than falsehood. For one, I am not willing to believe that the Son of God could thus palter in a double sense. And the same course of observation applies to all His exceeding great and precious promises and invitations. When He says, "Come unto Me, ye weary and heavy laden; take my yoke on you, and learn of Me, and ye shall find rest to your souls," does He mean that they who *do not come to Him* shall find rest all the same as they who do? When He stands and weeps over Jerusalem and laments that they would not be gathered to Him, and declares that now the day of their merciful visitation is past, that their house is left unto them desolate, and the things which belong to their peace are hidden from their eyes, does He indeed see beyond the few days of bloody conflict, in which Jerusalem will be destroyed and her children slaughtered in her streets, a heaven of perpetual joy and felicity into which they will all be gathered home? And does He weep because they are to be taken to heaven just as His own blessed martyrs have been, by fire and sword? When He signifies to Peter by what death He shall glorify God, He sheds no tears and utters no lamentations. And can we believe that the anticipation of the crucifixion of one of His own apostles, at the very time when that apostle was renewing the protestations of His love, excited less emotion in the Saviour's soul than the prophetic vision of similar sufferings on the part of His enemies? Surely the desolation of their house, and the hiding of the things which belonged to their peace, and the passing away of the day in which these things could be known, are associated in His mind with something more than the Roman sword or the Roman cross. Those tears over apostate Jerusalem are more terrible in their significance than His warnings about the undying worm and the quenchless fire.

When He said of Judas, whom He calls the "Son of Perdition" even while he was still numbered with the twelve, "Woe unto him by whom the Son of man is betrayed: it had been

good for that man if he had never been born," does He mean only that it will be a long time before Judas will be as holy and happy as the beloved John, and enter with the other apostles upon an eternity of blessedness? Can an eternity of blessedness be so nullified, even by antecedent ages of suffering, as to make the life that is capable of such a restoration a curse rather than a benefit?

But let us turn from these general considerations of the underlying assumptions of Christ's teaching, with which it would be easy to fill a volume, to the most specific declarations of our text. These words are the utterance of a divine prescience. As a prophet, the Saviour is looking into the future and declaring that which shall be hereafter. He says nothing here directly of hell, of condemnation, or of everlasting punishment; but in language most profound and comprehensive, "Ye shall die in your sins; whither I go ye cannot come." The two propositions are parallel and co-extensive. They stand in the relation of cause and effect.

To die in one's sins is to die unforgiven. If forgiveness were a mere sovereign and arbitrary act of divine mercy, performed by God without regard to the sinner's moral state or to the claims of His own holy law, the thought of dying unforgiven would not be so dreadful. But all Christians agree that forgiveness is not a mere arbitrary exercise of mercy, which can be put forth at any time and without regard to the sinner's attitude toward God. It is an act of justice no less than of mercy. It is based on the satisfaction Christ rendered to the divine law in behalf of them that believe. It is inseparably connected with faith. The Saviour expounds the text with the further declaration, "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins."

And, therefore, to die in sin is to die under the condemnation of the divine law—even that "curse" which is pronounced upon all those who "continue not in all things written in the book of the law to do them." And so the Saviour says, "He that hath not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Moreover, to die in sin is to die with its uncleanness and its bitter recollection, clinging to the soul. The words which Christ puts into the mouth of Abraham in the parabolical conversation with the rich man, "lifting up his eyes in torment," strike the key-note of all weeping and wailing. "Son, remember!" That remembrance, with its bitter remorse and its thronging images of uncleanness, may constitute in the next world, as it so often does in this, the chief ingredient in the misery of sin. But whatever may be the form or mode of future punishment, it is always based upon and accurately proportioned to the ill-desert of human sin. This is the doctrine

of all Christian theology from the days of the apostles to the present time. To represent any man, living or dead, as teaching that God makes millions of immortal creatures simply for the purpose of consigning them to everlasting torments, or that He ever punishes any one without a strict and just regard to personal ill-desert, is to bear false witness against our neighbor. It is high time for those who boast of their liberality and charity to lay aside the old and threadbare slanders about God damning men, and even unconscious infants, by an arbitrary decree, which are adroitly fastened upon those who have long since been dead and cannot answer for themselves, but are really intended to bring reproach and excite prejudice against the character and opinions of the living. For one, I rejoice that my faith is orthodox—that is to say, according to rule, the rule being the written Word of God. Though I do not acknowledge any human authority as above or coördinate with the holy Scriptures, I also rejoice that in the full exercise of the right of private judgment I am able to give a general assent to the doctrines taught by such eminent expounders of the Scriptures as Augustin and Calvin. And now I declare to you that the uniform belief not only of these great teachers, but of all who hold the doctrine of future punishment—whether Catholic or Protestant, whether Calvinistic or Arminian—is this: that men are punished in the future world *simply and solely for their personal ill-desert*, or, as the text says, because *they die in their sins*. What will be the consequence of thus dying in sin? Manifestly, unforgiven sin in its condemnation and pollution will adhere to the soul as long as the soul exists, unless there is in the future world some process more effectual for its removal than any to which it has been subjected in this life. Is there such a future redemption? In other words, is there any foundation for the theory of the restoration of the wicked? This theory rests upon one of two hypotheses. The first is, that punishment itself will bring the sinner to repentance and reformation; that this is the only end for which it can be justly inflicted, and that when this end is accomplished the punishment will necessarily cease. The objections to this are obvious and insurmountable. (1) It is contrary to all human experience. When was a child made good merely by whipping, or a prisoner reformed simply by bonds and imprisonment? (2) It is entirely without Scripture foundation. Where is there a single text to support it? (3) It involves the manifest absurdity that punishment is no longer deserved, and can no longer be inflicted when the reformation of the sinner becomes hopeless; so that, in order to escape from divine judgment, a man has only to make himself as bad as he can be. (4) And, above all, it dishonors the method of salvation revealed in the gospel. If divine punishment shall prove more effectual than divine

love—if the fire that is not quenched will melt those who could not be moved by the light and sweetness that stream down upon us from the cross—what then becomes of the apostle's assertion that the Gospel of Christ is "the power of God unto salvation"? The second hypothesis upon which the theory of restoration rests is in itself far less objectionable; it supposes that the gospel will be preached in the next world to those who have not heard it, or who, having heard, have rejected it in this; and it is assumed that under their changed circumstances, all who have died in their sins will accept the new offer of salvation through faith in Christ. If this could be shown to be true, there is no human heart, certainly no Christian heart, which would not embrace it with joy unspeakable. The gospel is a joyful sound wherever it may be heard. We do not insist upon the possibility, not to say the probability, that they who have refused the inviting voice in this world may be equally obdurate in the next. We are more than willing to believe that if the glad tidings of salvation could be proclaimed anew among those who have died in their sins, their weeping and wailing would be hushed, yea, turned into the ecstatic song of salvation. Our objection to the hypothesis is that it is a *mere* hypothesis. Certainly our Lord Jesus Christ never taught any such doctrine; nor is there in His recorded teaching a single sentence from which any one has ever pretended to derive the confirmation of it.

This admitted silence of the Saviour is sufficient to condemn the whole theory; for it compels the advocates of such human speculation to assume a superiority either of wisdom or of kindness to the Son of God. *He* never taught such a doctrine; but they vindicate the character and government of God by supplementing His defective teaching with a theory of their own. But the silence of the Saviour is not all. He used words and uttered warnings and drew pictures utterly inconsistent with the supposition that He believed there would be another probation in the world to come; and that, too, under circumstances where, if He had entertained any such views, common honesty and human kindness would have compelled Him to avow them. For example, take His answer to the question which agitated men's minds in His day just as it does now—the question, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" (Luke xiii: 23.) Here was a grand opportunity for the full exposition of the truth—for the comfort of anxious inquirers in all time to come. How did He answer? Did He reprove and denounce the underlying impression in the inquirer's mind that salvation would be limited? Did He say, "Many will fail to be saved under the present dispensation, but they will have another and more successful trial hereafter?" No! His answer is in these solemn and plain words: "*Strive to enter in at the strait gate:*

for many, I say unto you, *will seek* to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not, whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But He shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves* thrust out." This answer must be taken in its connection and in its completeness. It will not do to break it into fragments and select what suits our theory. Here is no intimation that the gospel will be preached over again in the next world in order to persuade those who have rejected it here to accept it there. If the Saviour had that thought in His mind, how could He forbear to express it? True, He did not consent to gratify human curiosity in regard to the numbers of the saved or of the lost. But He did propose then, as always, to teach all who came to Him whatever is necessary for their salvation and their comfort. He is "the consolation of Israel." If it is necessary now, for the vindication of His redeeming love and for the encouragement of poor sinners, to prophecy a repetition in the next world of the rejected gospel offer, it was just as necessary then. But He who was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord made no such prophecy; on the contrary, He taught the opposite doctrine in words whose plainness cannot be improved. He declared that after the probation of the present day of salvation is ended *they who seek to enter in shall not be able*. Why? Because the Master of the house has risen up and shut to the door. "The figure is the usual one of a feast, at which the householder entertains (in this case) the members of his family. These being assembled, he rises and shuts the door, and none are afterward admitted."—*Alford*. The unfortunate cries of those who stand without and knock are answered from within with the repeated declaration, "I know you not whence ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity." Nor is this prophecy of the future lightened or altered in anywise by those parables in which the same figure of a feast is employed to represent the provisions, the purposes and the final results of the gospel in its broadest applications. One of them concludes with the unqualified declaration, "I say unto you that none of those men which were bidden (and had refused) shall taste of my supper." In another, a man who had come in without the wedding garment is "bound hand and foot and taken away and cast into outer

darkness." Now, we ask again, could the Saviour have used such language if the gospel is to be preached over again in the next world to those who have rejected it in this?

Or take the picture of eternity which He painted in such lurid colors in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man. That conversation between Abraham and the lost soul, though parabolical, contains no sentiment which is not true. A parable of Christ is not a fable. What did he mean by the statement which he puts in Abraham's lips, "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot, neither can they pass to us that would come from thence"? Is such language consistent with the supposition that He knew all the while there would be a going down of gospel messages and invitations from heaven to those who die in their sins—a restoration of the lost to all the opportunities and joys of salvation?

Or take the plain words of our text: "*Whither I go ye cannot come.*" We know whither He has gone—to the bosom of the Father; to the innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect; to the social joys of Jerusalem the golden; to the immaculate city and temple and home of the soul, into which there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth or worketh abomination or loveth a lie. And before He goes He says to the unbelievers around him, and to all who shall die in their sins, "*thither ye cannot come.*" Did He mean only that they could not come *for the present*? Why then did He not say so? It would have been so easy, and so honest, and so kind to tell the whole truth in the premises. He did say to one of His disciples, "Whither I go thou canst not follow Me *now*, but thou shalt follow me *afterwards*." But to those who shall die in their sins He says emphatically and without any qualification, "*Whither I go ye cannot come.*" And are we to believe that the two statements so studiously different in their terms mean precisely the same thing? No! We dare not throw such contempt upon the truthfulness or the loving kindness of the Saviour as to suppose He would thus prevaricate. If others turn away from Him because of these hard doctrines, we will only come nearer and say more lovingly, "Lord, to whom can we go? Thou only hast the words of eternal life." We are willing to accept the hard things for the sake of the light and sweetness with which they are connected. God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; it was condemned already. The foreboding of wrath to come which He formulated into the doctrine of future punishment is not the gospel; it is only the dark background of natural religion on which the gospel is projected; and we cling to it, not only because it is the dictate of the human conscience and the common sense of mankind, but because He who is

the light of the world has inseparably connected it with the sweetest promises of His grace and glory.

We have thus endeavored candidly to answer the question proposed at the beginning of this discourse: Why it is that the Christian ministry and the Christian Church in all ages have so tenaciously held the doctrine of future everlasting punishment. If these reasons needed any further confirmation it might be found in the restlessness, the violence, the pitiable inconsistencies and self-contradictions of those who denounce the orthodox faith. One thing is characteristic of the whole class: They pull down but do not undertake to build up.

They declare with awful imprecations what they do not believe, and illustrate their meaning with what we would fain regard as unintentional caricatures of the belief of others; but when they attempt to set forth what they do believe, they either stagger to and fro like a ship in a storm without rudderbands or compass, or else they double back, like a timid hare, to the orthodox faith from which they before fled with horrible outcries.

That I may not appear rash or uncharitable in these remarks, let me give you a single illustration. It is found in a celebrated sermon on this subject by the Rev. Dr. Farrar, Canon of Westminster. When we began the reading of that discourse we were amazed at the violence with which he assails a doctrine so deeply imbedded in the standards, the liturgy and the literature of his own Church; and no less at his misapprehension, not to say perversion, of the views of great and good men in his own as well as in other Christian denominations. But when we had reached the conclusion of the sermon our amazement was turned into laughter. For what is the conclusion to which he comes through so many pages of passionate declamation, and which he announces with the apparent heroism of a martyr going to the stake? He says: "*My hope is that the vast majority of the lost will at length be found.*" Indeed! And this is the pretended novelty for the proclamation of which the bones of the dead in Westminster Abbey have been shaken, and in view of which rumor, with her thousand tongues, declares that the old orthodox faith has been abandoned. Why, every orthodox preacher in Europe and America, and all their predecessors from the days of Augustin and of Paul, while rejecting the eloquent Canon's wild speculations about the preaching of the gospel in the next world, agree with him "that the vast majority of the lost will be found." In fact, all orthodox preachers not only *hope*, but are firmly persuaded, that "where sin abounds grace will much more abound," and that the great majority of mankind will be saved. The salvation of all who die in infancy has, from the beginning, kept the ma-

majority on the side of Christ and heaven: and that majority will be unspeakably increased in the days of millennial glory. Why, even Jonathan Edwards, whose discourses contain the most terrific, and we are willing to add the most unwarrantable, descriptions of future punishment, insists that the finally lost will bear no larger proportion to the saved than the inmates of a prison to the population of an empire. He represents the fewness of their numbers one element of their punishment. But now, what have we to do with the numbering of the lost or the saved? We are told that the saved will be "a great multitude which no man could number, of all nations and kindred and people and tongues." Let us see to it that we and all we can influence are among that blessed multitude. Our business is to strive that we may enter in. Let us not die in our sins, through want of faith in Jesus Christ, and so be excluded from the place and the state whither He has gone. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that *who-soever believeth in Him* might not perish, but have everlasting life."

The Judgment Day.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY H. P. Liddon, D.D., CANON OF ST. PAUL'S, LONDON.

The day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.—1 Thessalonians, v : 2.

MANY of us must have wondered sometimes at the boldness of this comparison, in which the second coming of our holy and gracious Saviour is likened to the act of the felon who breaks into a man's house at night with intent of plunder and violence. If Scripture did not warrant the figure we should not, we think, have ventured on it. Nay, it may be that an inspired apostle would hardly have held this language, if his Lord and Master had not led the way. The comparison is, in fact, suggested by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and He uses it for a very simple purpose. The figures and similes of Scripture are used to illustrate some single point or points; and to make any larger application of them than that for which they are destined is to fall into mistakes more or less serious. Here it is not the moral character of the thief: it is the characteristics of his action which are in question. In His great discourse on the destruction of the temple and the end of the world, just before He suffered, our Lord had bidden His disciples, "Watch, therefore, for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and would not have suffered his house to be broken through; therefore be ye also ready, for at such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." And St. Luke reports the same words as having fallen from our Lord, but, as might naturally have been the case, on a different occasion. Our Lord does not say in so many words that the last day will come as a thief comes in the night; He only refers to the precautions which a prudent householder might take against a thief, as an illustration of the duty of Christians to watch and prepare for the last day. St. Paul draws out into the light the inference which is already latent in the words of Christ—the inference that between the circumstances of the second advent and the inroad of the thief at night there is, at any rate, some sort of common ground or correspondence.

"The day of the Lord." By this expression must be meant a day which will be in some unique and preeminent sense His day; for of course all days are, in reality, days of the Lord—His days, who is the Lord of time as He is the Lord of life. "The heavens are Thine; the earth also is Thine; Thou hast

prepared the light and the sun." All time, like all space, is necessarily within the domain of the infinite and eternal Being, and in this sense, day by day, He makes the outgoings of each morning and evening to praise Him, and cannot possibly be restricted to any one period of time as though it alone were His—as though other days might belong of right to some human or created proprietors. By "the day of the Lord," to whom all time of right belongs, is meant that day on which He will take the first place in the thoughts of His creatures. This is the natural sense of such language, whether in the phrase of common life or in the phrase of the Bible. When we speak of the day of Austerlitz, or of the day of Waterloo, we mean those particular days which will ever be associated in human history with the great battles that were fought on them. When a late psalmist speaks of the day of Jerusalem He means the fatal day of its humiliation and ruin. When Isaiah refers to the day of Midian he is thinking of its memorable overthrow. In these and like expressions a day is appropriated to a particular subject, because on that day, for whatever reason, it has had or will have a first place in the thoughts of men. The Lord's day—the only New Testament name for the Christian Sunday—is so called because Christ, by His resurrection from the dead, has made it His own, so that on it we Christians owe to Him, week by week, our first thoughts of gratitude and praise. "This," to the end of time, "is the day that the Lord hath made. Rejoice and be glad in it." And the day of the Lord, yet future, is the day on which, most assuredly, all thoughts will turn to Him, whether willingly or by constraint—whether in terror or in joy; the day on which His throne of majesty will supersede all human forms of power—in which His magnificence will dim utterly all human splendors—in which His truth will silence into nothingness all human errors and guesses at truth—in which His justice will take the place of all that is named justice, rightly or wrongly, among the sons of men; the day in which everything else but He will be lost sight of, and will be as though it were not—in which the eternal reality of His relation to the world and to man will also be the acknowledged reality. As we have just heard in the first lesson, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed, and the haughtiness of man shall be made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

"The day of the Lord." We know it by a more familiar name given it on three occasions by our Lord Himself, and on three, at least, by the apostles after Him: it is the day of judgment. It is the day on which He will bring the vast and complex moral account between Himself and His responsible creatures to a close—to a final, irreversible decision. Certainly He is always judging us as He is always keeping us in life—as He is

always watching, always guarding us, moment by moment. From our first hours of real responsibility to our last breath, the successive variations of our exact moral condition have been registered with faultless accuracy in the tablets of the eternal mind. It is not to be supposed for a moment that a day is yet to come, on which, like some human judge traveling on the circuit, He, the Eternal, will discover for the first time, by some laborious legal process—by arguments pleaded before Him, or from the examination of witnesses—what manner of men we severally are. “Thou art about my path, and about my bed, and spiest out all my ways, for, lo, there is not a word in my tongue but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.” No, but on that day—the day of the Lord—the day of judgment—what is always true will become, so to speak, visible, palpable, acknowledged—will inflict itself with a terrific and resistless force upon the reluctant senses and imaginations of men. “When the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory, and before Him shall be gathered all nations; and He shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.” “The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” “Every eye shall see Him, and they also which pierced Him; and all the kindreds of the world shall wail because of Him.” “We must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive for the things done in his body according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or bad.”

“The day of the Lord.” They tell us nowadays that this is only the Christian form of the old pagan fable about Minos and Rhadamanthus. It were better to say that those pagan fables were broken rays of light spreading through the kingdom of darkness from one original truth—a truth which Christendom has since received in its fulness from the Father of Lights. The pagan fable about the judgment is related to Christ’s revelation of the judgment, just as the pagan Olympus is related to the Christian heaven—just as the dread of a future world of punishment which haunts the conscience and the literature of paganism through so many centuries is related to the Christian revelation of hell. On this side is the truth; on that is its mutilation or its caricature, or its dim presentiment amid the clouds and the darkness. But the original truth is not the less true because it is buried away here or there beneath the typical forms of pagan error. It is the human conscience, after all, taught by God’s primitive revelation in nature, which in some distant age has so buried it; and the Christian Church does but give clear, full expression to a certainty of which

heathenism is always, more or less, mindful—the certainty that we men must be judged, when with St. Paul at Athens she proclaims year after year and century after century that “God hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained whereof He hath given assurance unto all men in that He hath raised Him from the dead.”

And the day of the Lord will come, we are told, as a thief in the night. What are the ideas which this comparison is meant, or calculated, to suggest to us?

“As a thief in the night.” To most men this comparison will be suggestive, first of all, of fear. A thief enters a house at night under circumstances, and with an object, which create natural alarm. He knows what he wants. He is aided by the darkness. He is prepared to carry out his purpose. He has anticipated resistance. He has taken his measures. Even if he should meet a man upon the staircase as resolute and as well prepared as himself—even if he should have in the end to make his escape without effecting his purpose—his coming of itself cannot but be regarded with much apprehension and disquiet. And the first class of feelings which must arise at the thought of the second coming of Christ must be of the same character. The old prophets Joel and Malachi, who, gazing over the horizon of some nearer judgments, described as yet afar off across the ages the coming day of universal doom—spoke of it as the great and terrible day of the Lord—spoke of it as the great and dreadful day. And we with the gospel of mercy and salvation in our hands—we cannot but echo their language. We cannot but own that we, too, are afraid of God’s judgments, to us more definitely revealed. Yes, it is certain, since the word of Christ is pledged thereto—it is certain that a day will come in which the fear of the Lord and the glory of His majesty will be brought before His creatures as never before.

We shall witness this day, each one of us—the old and the young, the foolish and the wise, the saved and the lost. As surely as we have seen this morning’s sunlight we shall hereafter behold the eternal Judge upon His throne, the countless multitudes before Him, the division between His creatures deep and irreversible, the disciplined activities of His angels, the issues on this side and on that, as all gradually settles down into the last unchangeable award. Great artists have dared to portray that day—in a past age, Michael Angelo—in this, Cornelius; but in the presence of that scene the highest art is powerless. It must content itself at best with snatches of bliss and snatches of agony—with glimpses and fragments of a scene too vast, too sublime, too terrific to submit to the conditions of even the highest art. Scripture is always far in advance of

anything that art can attempt on such a subject : and as we follow its disclosures we can but exclaim—

“Great God, what do I see and hear?
The end of things created !
The Judge of all men doth appear
On clouds of glory seated.
The trumpet sounds, the graves restore
The dead which they contained before.”

And then we add, “Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.”

But is this all? Surely, surely not! The last word of the gospel is not fear, but love. It is not disquiet, but peace. If we will, the Judge upon His throne may be our friend and Saviour—the angels the ministers not of His justice, but of His grace; and we ourselves, instead of calling on the mountains to cover us and on the rocks to fall on us, may be bold to look up to Him and to lift up our heads, conscious that at last our redemption draweth nigh. “Who shall lay anything to the charge of God’s elect,” even in that supreme moment? “It is God that justifieth them.” “Who is He that condemneth them? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who also sitteth at the right hand of God, where He liveth to make intercession for us.” The question is, What are our relations to Him now—what our faith, our love, our repentance? It is in the spring that the autumn crops are sown. It is in youth that the fortunes of life are shaped. It is during the years of time that men decide how they will meet the judgment and that which follows it.

“As a thief in the night.” Another truth which is suggested by the figure is the suddenness of the advent. There is the contrast which it will present to many of God’s judgments in this present life. They approach us with measured steps. We see them coming; we calculate the pace of their advance. We know almost to a moment when and how they will be upon us—when and how they will spend themselves; for they reach us through the world of nature or through the world of man, and the natural and human world lie open to our observations, and we know something of the laws that govern them. Take those three judgments which are not seldom put together in the Bible—war, famine, pestilence. Neither of these comes upon us altogether as a robber into the house at night. Before the war breaks out we see the causes which are increasingly likely to provoke it. Those which are permanent and in the nature of things—those which belong to the period—the antipathies of race, the aspirations or the wrongs of nations, the influence and bias of leading men, the pressure of circumstance, the drift of currents of popular feeling.

The cloud darkens gradually before it bursts—at least, so gradually that the exception seems to prove the rule. And

so with famine. We observe in particular conditions of the atmosphere that which will produce a failure of the crops over a wide extent of fertile country. We know that this failure, in the absence of sufficient communications by land or water, will lead to famine in particular districts; and thus many months, at least, elapse after the first apprehensions of the coming trial before its pressure is actually felt. So it is, to a certain extent at least, even with pestilence—at any rate, with a large number of fatal epidemic disorders. When the Asiatic cholera last visited this country, its gradual advance from city to city across Europe was noted just as if it had been a great personage on his travels, whose movements might be almost anticipated, who was said to be on his way to visit England. And we know that a hot season or a great abundance of raw fruit, or bad sanitary arrangements in a crowded town, will bring fever in their train; and when the outbreak occurs it is impossible to say that it is unexpected. Neither war nor famine nor pestilence comes on man, generally speaking, like the thief in the night. But with the second coming of Jesus Christ it will be otherwise. There are, indeed, certain signs visible to the skilled sight of faith unobserved by those who walk by sight—signs which will precede the advent—signs in the world of thought and in the world of nature—widespread, intellectual confusion, political and social perplexity, material ruin—“signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations and perplexity, men’s hearts failing them for fear.” Nay, as St. Paul says to the Thessalonians in his second letter, when they had understood his first words on the subject too narrowly, there will be a falling away from the Christian faith and the coming of one person who will embody all the hostilities toward God that are scattered throughout human nature and human history—the antichrist. No such person answering to the apostolic description would seem yet to have appeared, though thoughtful and religious minds do recognize in the present circumstances of the world signs of his possible approach. But his appearance and all that follows him will be sudden enough, and he, we are told, will be consumed by the breath of the mouth of Christ and destroyed at the brightness of His coming. And thus, in reality, of that day and that hour knoweth no man, but the Father which is in heaven. We only know that it will come when men least expect it; that it will be the fullest justification of the proverb, “Nothing is probable except the unforeseen.”

Are we looking out for it? To keep watch for that which is certain—which will come unexpectedly—which will affect us most intimately—is surely only common sense. We know how it is in ordinary life. I am thinking of a man who has been told that a relation may return any day from a distant colony,

and raise questions in the law courts which will imperil his own right to his entire property. This man cannot help giving a great deal of thought to this expected rival. The mind reverts to the topic when he has nothing else to do. He looks morning by morning at the list of ships which arrive or sail. He knows the main lines of packets by heart. He takes quite a new interest in the weather, in the telegraphic accounts of storms, in the accounts of recent voyages which other travelers have made. The whole subject is full of practical interest for him. His thoughts settle around it by a kind of mental gravitation which needs no outward exhortation or impulse to second its force. The second coming of our Lord and Saviour is much more certain than that of the colonist in question, who may be drowned or may die long ere he can touch the shores of England. But are we looking out for it? It may not come to us on this side of the grave; it will, practically, have come to us at death. At once certain and uncertain—certain as to its reality, uncertain as to its date—it bids us, at least, keep watch for it. A Christian's first practical anxiety should be expressed in his Master's words, "Lest coming suddenly He find me sleeping."

"As a thief in the night." The figure suggests, lastly, that which cannot be prevented by any efforts of our own. The man whose house is broken into may resist the thief: he cannot ward off the attack by preventive measures. To do this he should be in the confidence of his assailant, whereas it is his assailant's purpose to keep him in the dark. And here again there is a contrast between the second coming and those visitations which I have already noticed. In presence of the approach of war, of famine, of pestilence, man is very far from being powerless. Not merely can he do much to limit the range of these disasters; he can do much to prevent them. What is war? War is the product of human misconduct—of human ambitions, human greed, human cruelty, human injustice. Let these be curbed—be cured—by the advancing gospel, and wars will become first rare and then impossible. What is famine? Famine is, at least, not seldom, the consequence of want of foresight, of bad communications, of reckless administration, of wasteful expenditure. As these are corrected by the industry and resolution of mankind—I do not dare to say that famine will never occur—I do say that it will be in not a few cases prevented. What is pestilence? Pestilence is constantly the product of bad air, bad drainage, bad food, close, fetid, unwholesome dwelling-houses. It may be checked—nay, often it may be arrested altogether—by that physical knowledge and skill which is so great a gift of God to this our modern world, by removing conditions that assist infection, by promptly confronting the very first symptoms of disease with its remedy or its antidote. But as against the

coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven, how can man take any precautions whatever? The causes which will determine that event lie as entirely beyond human control as do the movements of the planets. If we may observe, or think that we can observe, some of these causes, we can do nothing beyond observing them. We can, indeed, pray "Lord Jesus come quickly." We can be "looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God," as the apostle bids us. But we cannot prevent if we would, for one moment, that which is inevitable. We can but prepare to meet it.

Are we doing this? Brethren, we may prepare for the day of judgment by judging ourselves in self-examination. We may erect each one of us in his own heart a tribunal, and bid our acts, our words, our thoughts, our habits, our motives, our hopes, our fears, our passions, our shortcomings, our training of conscience and our respecting of conscience, our loyalty to duty and to principle, to relations, to dependents, to friends, to superiors, to pass before it. In those inmost recesses of being, in moments of entire sincerity with self, we may hear if we will the echoes of the voice of Christ in mercy, or in condemnation, as that voice will sound to us hereafter from the judgment throne. In view of the future which awaits us, no moments of life are better spent than those which we spend in anticipating the verdict of the great Judge, in the solitude of our chambers, night by night, before we go to rest.

And we may prepare for the day of judgment by devoting one day in the year, or in six months, or in each month, as may be possible, to making in an especial way a business-like preparation for death. Death, like judgment, comes as a thief. Death is the king of terrors—often quite sudden, often quite unprepared for. Death is the antechamber, or the door of the antechamber of the judgment hall of Christ. As far as we are individually concerned, our eternal state will have been already settled when we die. There may be after death, and before the general judgment, increase of light and peace to the departed faithful such as is hinted at when St. Paul makes the day of Christ alone the limit of the soul's progressive growth. The question whether we are saved or lost will have been fixed forever when we die. And, therefore, to prepare for death is a man's true and most serious business during his life, and it is certain that no serious preparation will ever be made by those men who do not make a business of making it. One day from time to time snatched from the busiest life, devoted to self-examination—to prayer—to the review of old resolutions—to the formation of new resolutions—one day passed entirely with Jesus Christ, our crucified Redeemer, our future judge, but now, if we will, our helper and our friend—one day in which that which perishes is set aside and the

eye is fixed steadily, resolutely on that which does not perish—that which lasts—one day when we think over one by one that company of souls whom we have known, perhaps loved, here below, and who have gone on, with what results we know not, though we may hope or guess much—who have gone on across those dark waters to the brink of which we are ever hastening—oh, depend upon it, to have a definite rule like this is light; it is hope; it is vigor; it is improvement. “Ye,” says the apostle to his Thessalonian friends—“Ye are not in darkness that that day should overtake you as a thief.” God grant that it may be thus with us too; but this must depend upon the use we make of what remains to us of time—it may be of the very few years or months or weeks or days or hours that do still remain of it.

The Misery of Man.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY **Adolphe Monod, D.D.** TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY
J. E. RANKIN, D.D., WASHINGTON, D. C.*

For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all.—
Rom. xi: 32.

THE man who thoroughly understands this single verse has the key to the whole Bible. The doctrine of the Bible has these two fundamental articles: The Misery of Man—The Mercy of God. The text mentions them both, and sets them over against each other. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief," here is man's misery; "that He might have compassion upon all," here is God's mercy.

I shall discuss these two declarations in two sermons. To-day I shall show you man's misery, leaving it for the next Lord's day to show the remedy for this misery in the mercy of God. The text of my first sermon is the first sentence of the whole passage: "God hath concluded them all in unbelief." It needs certain explanations. In the first place, to connect it with the rest of the chapter, where the apostle has divided the human race into two classes—Jews and Gentiles—we see that his complete idea is this: "God hath concluded them all in unbelief;" that is, Jews as well as Gentiles. Now, are we to conceive that the apostle's meaning is limited to Jews and Gentiles, his cotemporaries? It embraces all men, of all periods. This is settled beyond a doubt by another passage, where he sets forth the same view, extending it to all mankind. "But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin." We may, therefore, lay aside the distinction between Jews and Gentiles, and confine ourselves to the general thought of the text, "God hath concluded all men in unbelief."

The word "unbelief" might be replaced by the synonymous word "sin," which is more commonly employed in the Scriptures, and which the apostle uses in the parallel passage from the Epistle to the Galatians, which we have just quoted. As to this expression, "God hath concluded all under sin," it would be as unnecessary as it is easy to prove by all the Bible that it does not mean that God constrains men to sin, but that He declares them to be sinners. Finally, "the man" in question is the natural man; that is, man as he is by nature and before he has submitted to that radical change which the Scriptures call "conversion."

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Thus explained, this is the doctrine of the text: *God has declared that every man, in his natural state, is a sinner.* It is of this truth that I wish to convince you to day.

Does this wish seem to you uncharitable, and does some one complain that from among so many themes which I might have fixed upon for this pulpit I have selected so harsh a one? I will answer him by an illustration: A man is attacked by a severe sickness; incurable, if neglected; curable, if taken in season. Two friends visit him; one of them says, "You are not sick;" the other, "You are sick, and if you do not send for a physician you are in peril of your life." The kindness of the first, is it not cruel?—and the cruelty of the second, is it not kind? I am about to perform to you to-day the office of the second friend—and God keep me from ever performing that of the first! I would not be kind to you after the manner of the world, which covers up the sickness of your soul in order that you may remain sick and may die; but I would be harsh after the manner of St. Paul; after the manner of St. John; after the manner of Jesus Christ; after the manner of God, who assure you of sin, that you may seek the remedy and may live; and I ask God to give me grace to convince you of sin, with power, with authority, but especially with love.

First of all, thoroughly understand what I mean by saying that you are all sinners. The word "sin" is imperfectly understood by many; and from this arises the common objection to the truth of the text. "The gospel," it is said, "exaggerates when it includes all under the universal accusation of sin; it speaks contrary to experience. If one should look at my life he would see that I am not a sinner; that I am neither avaricious, nor brutal, nor a drunkard; that I am not a treacherous friend, an ungrateful son, an unfaithful husband; and that if I were, I know others who surely are not." Those who speak thus confound two different things—*sin* and *vice*. I did not say all men are vicious. Should I say it, not only should I exaggerate, I should expressly contradict myself; for vice is an immoral state which brings upon one who lives in it the blame of other men—it is a disgrace; and it is true that in the more philosophical of modern languages the word *vice* is primarily synonymous with *shame*. Just as when we speak of a man with a feeble constitution we imply that other men are of a constitution more robust; so, when we speak of a vicious man, we imply that he belongs to a race who are not so. Avarice is a vice; men generally are not avaricious. Intemperance is a vice; men generally are not intemperate. Brutality is a vice; men generally are not brutal. All men are not vicious; but all men are sinners, which is a very different thing.

I cannot better give you the exact idea of this word *sin* than by recalling to you the original meaning in the language in

which the New Testament was written. The Greek word, which we here translate sin, signifies *to fail of an end; to lose one's way*. The sinner is a being lost; he is a traveler, with a destination before him, but misled to a route which does not lead to it. Or, putting in place of the figure what it signifies: the sinner is one who ought to follow a certain moral direction, and who takes the opposite. Having thus explained what it is to be a sinner, I shall now show that we are all such by nature, because we ought to love God more than everything else—and, in our natural state, we do love something else more than God.

If to establish these two points I should confine myself to the Scriptures I should say everything in a very few words; for I venture the declaration that in no book can you find anything more clearly established, or everywhere more constantly implied, than are these two assertions in the Scriptures—namely, that man ought to love God more than everything else, and that it is his nature to love something else more than God.

As to the first, one of the distinctive characteristics of the Scriptures is to put God especially in the foreground, and boldly claim for Him our first attention and our first love. To love God above everything was the very spirit and substance of the old law. The first commandment of the Decalogue is this: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And it signifies not only "Thou shalt reserve to God thine external worship, to the exclusion of every other being called a god," but more—Thou shalt reserve to God thine inward worship, thy love—to God, in preference to every other object. Moses and the prophet thus explained this commandment when they elsewhere declared in terms more distinct: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." The new law, which is the perfect one, instead of abrogating any portion of the old, sustained and developed it, and put in its true light the fundamental principle that we must love God more than everything else. And Jesus Christ answered the question of the lawyer, "What is the greatest commandment of the law?" by turning to the precept of Moses: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind, and with all thy soul," and saying, "This is the first and great commandment." It is true that this commandment is joined to another, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." But He gives us to understand by the epithet which He applies to it that it is "second," and like "the first." And he elsewhere makes it apparent, as do all His apostles also, that He considers love to one's neighbor as subordinate to love to God, and as necessarily springing out of it; so that it is less as a sacred, fundamental commandment

that He recommends it than as a sequel and sign of the first, according to the words of St. John: "We have received of Him this commandment, that he who loveth God love his brother also." Let no man, as he remembers that the gospel many times put *charity* above the commandments of the law, conclude that this view is overthrown; for the word *charity* has a meaning more comprehensive in the original language of the New Testament than in our own—it signifies love in general; Christian love; pure, disinterested affection, whether applied to the Creator or to the creature; so that it has been translated in many languages by the word *love*. Moreover, not to leave any doubt that love for God ought to rule over and regulate every other love, Jesus Christ chose, among all our affections, the one most obligatory—namely, the love of our neighbor; and, among all the exercises of this love, the one most indispensable, namely, filial piety, and then declared that even filial piety must be constantly subordinated to piety toward God. "Who so loveth father or mother more than Me cannot be My disciple." Lo, He firmly maintains, with all the Scriptures, that man must love God above everything else.

The Scriptures do not speak less clearly upon the second proposition: that such is man's estate by nature, that he loves something else more than God. It would be easy for me to cite texts in which this disturbance is affirmed: "All we like sheep, have gone astray;" as sheep who separate themselves from the shepherd, "we have turned every one to his own way;" we have begun to be "children of disobedience," estrayed from God, without love to Him, living after our own desires without inquiring what is His will; "and are, by nature, children of wrath, even as others"; "the whole world lieth in wickedness"; we are "dead in trespasses and in sins"; "if we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But should I limit myself to these detached quotations, I should give you the impression that the Scriptures have declared the disturbance of man's affections only in isolated passages; which you may think perhaps I have gathered after great research, and with regard to which it is needful to examine the time, the occasion, and a certain wordiness of language; whereas they express themselves less in isolated declarations than in direct allusions, less by the letter rather than by the spirit and harmony of the whole; and in passages where they more completely disclose and develop their fundamental principles. But this is all I am able to lay before you in a few words. I am obliged to remand every one of you to the Bible in order to prove the truth of this affirmation; recalling to your attention a single portion which I especially commend to your study: namely, the first three chapters of the Epistle to the Romans, from which I have taken my text.

No doubt the object of this Epistle was to exhibit Christian doctrine ; for the apostle himself at the beginning announced his design in this verse, which is, as it were, the title of his whole work : " The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth." Very well, read then these three chapters all together, and with that attention which recovers the force of the apostle's language often lost in the first reading, from the ardor and profession with which he writes, and you will see that he rests the whole economy of salvation upon the disorder of man's natural affections, in terms so strong and positive, that after having read them we are compelled to admit that one cannot enter upon the Christian life without recognizing this disorder any more than one can enter a house without going through the door. For, wishing to carry the reader to this conclusion, which he announced at the outset, and repeats to the end of his argument, that God henceforth offers to man " justification by faith," because man could hope nothing " through works"—which means, by explaining St. Paul by St. Paul, that God henceforth offers to man eternal life as a favor because man can hope to make no return for it—he establishes the position that Jews as well as Gentiles are unworthy of reward ; and, on the contrary, are worthy of punishment, because that all are sinners ; and he proves the sin equally of Jew and Gentile, by what history records of their corruption.

Should any one think that he destroys his argument by saying that these chapters of St. Paul were written only for his cotemporaries, and that they do not concern us, he strangely abuses a principle, in which, indeed, there is some truth. It is true that we find in the Gospel written at a particular period, and primarily intended for the men of that period, certain details which have no direct application to ourselves, or to our own period ; certain allusions, exhortations, reproofs, considerations in connection with the circumstances of the time, and the character and genius of the age. It is moreover true that we might justly apply this observation to the beginning of the Epistle to the Romans, and say that certain facts to which St. Paul appeals, in order to prove the disturbance in man's affections, are taken from the history of his own time, and cannot all be connected with ours ; and, above all, that the picture, which he delineates, being made up of peoples taken as a whole, and by a single glance, is composed of different traits imprinted upon different individuals in such a manner, that all the disorders which he describes do not pertain to any one man in particular. This is all true ; but it is not less true that the Gospel, though it was written to all men, was written for all men ; that the eternal wisdom which dictated it, and to whose eye " a thousand years is as one day, and one day as a

thousand years," had in view all men and all periods; that St. Paul charges upon all men the existence of that same germ of evil, though it does not manifest itself by the very same fruits, and that, if instead of having written to the Romans in the first century, he had been writing to the Parisians in the nineteenth, he would have reached, though partly by different facts, the same declaration from which he would have excepted no one! "Every mouth shall be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. There is none righteous, no not one. There is none that seeketh after God. They are altogether gone out of the way: they are altogether become unprofitable. There is none that doeth good"—he repeats it—"no, not one." For if we deny the universality of these declarations; if, in the interpretation of the Gospel we attribute a larger part of it to the peculiarity of the period than the speaker has just indicated as proper; if we venture to maintain that not only certain peculiarities, but related precepts, not only certain proofs in detail, but even entire arguments as well as the conclusion reached, not only certain verses but even entire paragraphs, chapters, perhaps whole books ought not to be considered because they were written only for contemporaries and do not concern us—you see the result! Free to cull from the Gospel, we shall believe nothing but what we want to believe, we shall reject whatever displeases us, upon the pretext that it does not concern us. And since it is easy to have a presentiment of what will be pleasing—that is, what will be conformed to our personal preference, and as everything which is contrary to us will displease us, it follows that we shall admit no more into the Gospel than what we already believe before we begin to read; and that we shall eliminate from it whatever is contrary to our ideas, that is precisely what might correct them, in other words, what was especially intended by God for us. After reading the last line we shall be almost precisely at the point where we began the first: little will be changed except in name; we shall have no change in the deep connections and sentiments of the soul. Far from me be those human systems and forced interpretations which under pretext of abstracting from our faith all that is unreasonable, falls into that terrible error, against which the Angel of the Revelation takes so much pains to warn the apostle St. John of "adding unto," or "taking from"; of correcting, substituting, "wresting the Scriptures," as Peter calls it; or, forgive the expression, of *discvanglizing* the Gospel and neutralizing the divine in the Word of God! Let this refined gospel, this gospel of man, teach what it pleases, I cling to the Gospel of God; and according to this Gospel, man is by nature in a state of sin, of error, of disorder. If not, we must efface all these passages which I have quoted, as well

as many others not quoted, in which this disorder is affirmed. If not, we must blot out all these passages which insist upon the necessity of conversion and recovery ; since man cannot return to the way, when he has never wandered from it, nor can he recover what he has not lost. If man is not in this condition of disorder, we must blot out all those passages which proclaim this reconciliation, this wonderful deliverance, this love which surpasses all knowledge ; since there can be no reconciliation without enmity ; no wonderful deliverance without frightful pain ; no infinite mercy without infinite misery. We must tear away page after page, treatise after treatise, book after book ; and after we have thus torn the Bible into tatters, we must tear these tatters themselves ; or, agree that according to the Bible, every man in his natural state is a sinner.

When the Word of God thus explains itself I do not need for myself any other authority ; but because I fear that many have not sufficient faith in the Bible to admit unhesitatingly all that it teaches, I shall for a moment descend to their plane, and compel them to see how reason itself, instead of contradicting the doctrine of the Bible, cannot refuse its assent to this doctrine ; because reason also establishes in its own manner these two points : that man ought to love God more than anything else, and that in his state of nature he loves other things more than he loves God.

To prove from reason that our supreme love is due to God is not an easy thing ; not because the justice of the proposition does not seem clear to me, but, on the contrary, because it seems so clear to me that, seeing it as by instinct, I am embarrassed when I try to demonstrate it. Still, let us try, and let us show that God as a Sovereign is worthy of our love, whether we consider Him in Himself or in His relations to us.

Who could be more to be loved, in Himself considered, than the Perfect One, in whom are found in the highest degree, tempered and relieved by each other, qualities the most worthy of admiration, the most worthy of affection, in whom everything is so excellent that all nations agree in reserving for those things which they wish to praise beyond expression the epithet *divine* ? And how can it fail to appear that such a Being has a right to expect of us, if we are in harmony with Him, all the veneration, all the devotion, all the love of which we are capable ?

But how much more appropriate to Him these sentiments when we contemplate not only what He is in Himself, but what He is in His relations to us : as the Being without whom we should have nothing, we should hope nothing—to say it in one word, without whom we should not be ! Pause a moment upon this last relation and consider it apart by itself ; and in order to perceive the obligation of loving God more than every-

thing else, only reflect that He is your Creator, and that you are His creature. Try to get some idea of what it is to create—to bring something out of nothing; to make us to be who would otherwise never have been. We cannot fathom the depth of this thought. It has abysses, where our power of thought is lost. But the little we can understand of it, even the impossibility of understanding more, will suffice to show us that the relation which unites the Creator to the creature is so strong, so intricate, so comprehensive, and, if I may so express it, so peculiar, that every other relation ought to be subordinated to it; every other obligation ought to be inferior to our obligation to God, and every other affection ought to be preceded, controlled and ruled over by love for God. But, more than this, not only is God supremely worthy of our love, He alone is worthy of it. All that is lovely comes from God; or, rather, all that is lovely *is* God. Holiness, truth, morality, conscience, happiness—names, honored by the respect of all nations and the reflecting men of the greatest genius—words which make the soul of man vibrate with a holy thrill, but have no authority which they do not borrow but from Him—fragments broken into pieces by minds too finite to comprehend all His attributes at one glance in one harmonious whole!

Holiness is God's will, truth His thought, happiness His state, morality His law, conscience his representative; and if you go back to the beginning of things, you see all these different routes, which religion and sound philosophy have revealed to man, converging more and more toward their Source, and all things finally meeting together in God, the common Centre of all radiance in the whole universe. Since, then, God is your beginning, your centre, your end, your all, commence to give Him your love, your heart, yourselves entirely; and after that there will be time to see to what extent your affections may be given to other objects without abstracting from that first love, while subordinating everything to it. Here is order. Depart from it, cease to love God more than everything else, and you will fall into a disorder as much greater as the fundamental relation which unites you to the Creator, upon whom depend all the secondary ones, which unite you to creatures, is greater than all other relations; since the first cannot be broken without taking all the rest with it.

Let us make this clear by an illustration. Learn the state of a man who does not love God more than all things else by what would happen to a planet, for instance, to the earth, if, ceasing to pursue her regular orbit around the sun, she should break away from her course and open for herself a free and independent pathway into space. Through this estrangement, through this *sin* of the earth would be broken the fundamental law of her being, and with it all the other laws de-

pendent upon it; at the same time that her relations to the sun would be disturbed, the same would be the case with her relation to her satellite and to all the other planets. Imagine the confusion which these changes would introduce among us: seasons which are marked by the earth's motion, day and night, summer and winter would no longer succeed each other; the ebb and flow of the seas deprived of their rule and restraint; the life of plants, animals and men arrested; and, without multiplying anticipations, disorder following disorder, until we should have a frightful chaos, in which, if perchance some traces of the original glory and beauty of our globe remained, they would only serve to magnify her confusion and shame. Such must be the inward disorder of man if he sunder himself from the principle of his being and deny to God his highest love.

Thus reason gives full assent to this assertion of the Scriptures, that in order to be in harmony with the creation man needs to love God more than everything else. It gives a similar assent to the other assertion of the Scriptures, that man in his natural state loves something else more than God.

For, examine seriously—you who have not submitted your hearts to conversion, and who, therefore, are in your natural state—examine if the sentiment which you cherish toward God can be called a dominant love. Love does not hide itself in the heart. It shows itself outwardly by certain visible marks. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" the eyes look, the hand toils, the whole man acts. Very well. Do you find in your life the marks of a dominant love to God? You shall judge of this yourselves. Supposing now that this love is in those who listen to me, I am about to draw an imaginary picture of their lives in order that you may compare it with your actual life, to see if my supposition is well or ill-founded.

To love God above all things is manifestly the natural bent of their hearts; and when I just said that they ought to live supremely for Him, each one understood me, anticipated me. In the morning, as soon as they awake, God is their first thought—a thought which they do not need to search for, since it comes to them of itself. They find it everywhere, indoors and out of doors. It is a thought which penetrates and environs them. It is in their heart, in the day-dawn which shines upon them, in the air they breath. In the evening the same thought follows them to the end, survives all other memories, is last extinguished by sleep, and oftentimes still occupies them in the dreams of the night, as during the day it occupied those moments of leisure when the mind was left to follow its own instinctive movements, without control of the will. All the day God is the soul of all they do; their

only ambitious to love and obey Him. Compelled to devote themselves to material employments, they would suffer from being distracted from His service, did they not find means of returning to it by the spirit whic^h they carry into their labor. Their greatest trial in this world is the fact that, by a burdensome body and finite powers they are prevented from giving themselves up with entire freedom to an apprehension of His attributes and His favors. With them the love of kindred and friends is, as it were, a reflection of the love of God, and when they love any other being but God, it is still God whom they love in that being. If they read, God is the favorite object of their reading. A book is preferred in proportion as it tells them more about Him; but His Word, above all things, has a peculiar attraction which they discover in nothing else; and in its assiduous study they find their duty even less than their pleasure. If they speak, God is still the habitual theme of their discourse. His name comes most frequently of itself to their lips. His goodness, how to please Him, the sadness of giving Him offense, fill all their conversation. They give only what time is indispensable to the cares of this life and the interests of this world, and if conversation in which God is not long occupies them, they at once experience a void which can be filled only by returning to Him. Finally, whatever they may do, even to eating and drinking, they do it to the glory of God. Nothing is more constant, more rigorous, more constraining than the sentiment which inspires them. And all men see, in all their life, that they are His without effort, from preference, devoted by a supreme affection.

My brethren dearly beloved, far be it from me to speak with irony. By this picture of what your life would be if you loved God supremely I wished you to see at a glance how far you are from love of this kind. Each one of you has been able to make for himself a comparison of this imaginary life with his real life; and each one has seen that it was different in all of these particulars. It is not true that each one of you has anticipated me when I described how we ought to live first of all for God. On the contrary, when you encountered some strong expression of love for God or devotion to God, you were tempted to see in it something novel, exaggerated or mysterious. It is not true that to love God is the irresistible bent of your soul. In order that this love spring up within you, you must be excited, stirred up; and the moment after it disappears like a spark, which mounts into the air and is extinguished. It is not true that your hardest deprivation is, that you are prevented by a burdensome and earthly body from meditating upon God and serving Him. You little perceive the misery of such a body, except when afflicted by material necessities or physical sufferings. It is not true that in all

whom you love it is God that you love. The sentiments of love and friendship are so vivid only because they relate to human beings; and if God ever comes between you and them, it is as a protector and not as the supreme object of affection. It is not true that the reading which attracts you most is that which makes you think most of God, and above all, His Word. You read religious reading from a sense of duty. You read your Bible because of your conscience. It is a task which must be done in order that you may be at peace with yourselves. But you keep your taste, your curiosity, your ardor for books full of worldly interests, if not of worldly lusts. It is not true that God is the habitual and favorite theme of your thoughts; alas, everything finds a place there but He! The happiness and health of your children, anxiety about their career, the prosperity of your country, the news of the day, the petty events of domestic life, perhaps, things most frivolous and indifferent, will occupy you in their turn, will fill your mind, will engage your conversation; but the name of God will never be mentioned, or will be employed with a timid reserve when not used with a profane levity. If it occurs to a man to speak of God with any animation, a certain pious shame will withhold him; he will not dare, it will seem strange, people will say he is preaching, that it is not the time, is not the place; as if to true love did not belong all times and all places! as though true love had so carefully to observe all the proprieties, and to bow so teachably to appearances of indifference! as though true love were something that a man could lay off and put on at his pleasure! as though he could show it or conceal it according to the day of the week, the hour of the day, the atmosphere of a dwelling!

Ah! I must say of your love for God precisely the opposite of what I have just said: there is nothing living, loving, animating in this love! The sentiment which you cherish for God (that which I say does not escape from me in the heat of discourse, it is an expression exact and well considered) the sentiment which you cherish for God is nothing different, if we may judge from your life, from a frigid esteem, a sentiment which a father or mother or brother or spouse or friend would not only not be satisfied with, but would regard as an indignity. Hence it is true that in the eye of reason itself the natural man does not love God more than everything else; is a wanderer, is a sinner.

After having seen that you do not love God with a dominant love, let us examine further, and we shall each one of us find some other object which we do love with a dominant love, and as we ought to love God. This object is not the same with all. All are sinners, but all are not sinners in the same way.

The object of the supreme love of a great many, indeed, of

nearly all men, in their natural state is the world. I thus term outward and visible things which contribute to our personal well-being and social standing : such as fortune, rank, popularity, knowledge, talent. It is one of these that the most of you will find the object of your supreme love ; not of a cold esteem such as you accord to God, but of a passionate and ardent affection. To you the supreme object of attachment is your property. It is no cold esteem which you render to silver and gold ; it is an ardent and passionate attachment. You regard them as your supreme good. You identify them with yourself. You make them your life, your rank, your everything. To another the object of supreme affection is rank, popularity. It is not a cold esteem which you accord to worldly distinctions ; it is an ardent and passionate ambition. In order to attain them you sacrifice your time, your ease, your health, your taste, your pride. To another the object of supreme love is knowledge, talent. It is not with a cold esteem that you have given yourself up to science, to intellect ; it is with a burning and passionate admiration. With what fervor do you desire them for yourselves ; with what animation do you exalt them in others ! With nearly all of you your supreme affection is the world and the things of the world. These things fill your hearts, preoccupy your minds, enliven your discourses. Your thoughts about them are always full of life and animation. You occupy yourselves with them, you speak of them, you write about them, you cherish them, you live in them. The first class of sinners and the most numerous are those who prefer the world to God—*worldly sinners*.

But let us be fair. All are not characterized by this worldliness of thought. Some have souls more tender and attachments more noble. They give not their hearts to outward things ; they give them to family and friendship. The object of their supreme affection is a father or a mother, a husband, a wife, a child, a friend, to whose happiness they devote their projects, their plans—all that they do and all that they have ; for whom they seem to exist, as much as for themselves, and even more ; and without whom they would not care to live. I guard myself against confounding them with *worldly sinners*. Their sentiments are as much superior as the soul is above things that are seen. I agree even that there is in this strong affection something touching, something lovely. But a beautiful idol is all the same an idol. Because they have set their supreme affection upon something more elevated than material things, it is no less true that they prefer the creature to the Creator. They divert to man that which they owe to God. They sin. The second class of sinners are those who prefer to God the objects of their affection—*affectionate sinners* !

Finally, perhaps, is that class of men who devote their su-

preme love neither to the world nor to the affections of the heart, but to what they accept as their duty, controlling their life according to conscience, without mounting up to the will of God and trying to become perfect, not to please God, but to content themselves. Certainly such men are superior to worldly sinners—to affectionate sinners even; and I am glad that our fallen nature is yet capable of such noble aspirations. But when we have granted them all that they can claim—honestly and honorably claim—we must still recognize the fact that these men are out of harmony with creation. They make a god of their conscience, and through this they unconsciously demoralize their conscience itself; for the conscience has the same relation to God which the moon has to the sun—it is only an auxiliary light, since God remains our principal light. The moment that it no longer says, *God wills*, but *I will!* conscience itself is rebellious; it sins. And then it happens to him who gives it his first love as Jesus Christ predicted: “If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” It is therefore possible for these slaves of duty, these worshipers of conscience, to be virtuous men, but not holy men; exempt from vice, but not exempt from sin. The third class of sinners, those who set conscience above God, are *virtuous sinners!*

Abstract these three classes of sinners—the multitude of worldly sinners, the great crowd of affectionate sinners, the well-scattered family of virtuous sinners—and what remains as Thy portion, O my God, and how many have reserved for Thee that supreme affection which is due from all? Not one!—no, not even a single one! We have all forsaken the Creator for the creature; we have altogether gone astray; we are all sinners.

My brethren, if this discourse has found any entrance into your souls; if it has penetrated you with any conviction, any feeling, any suspicion of the misery of your nature, I conjure you not to stifle that impression. You will succeed in allaying it, if you wish to. You have only to say, as you leave the church, “This doctrine is an exaggeration!” You will find it echoed all around you. You will believe it, because you wish to. You will efface the solemn truth which I have demonstrated, but to your own injury! Because you have dissipated the truth, it will be no less the truth; because you have shut the Bible, it will be no less the Word of God; because you have put your hand upon your wound, it will be no less severe, and you will gain nothing by covering it; but you will conceal it from the surgeon until, perhaps, it shall prove fatal. May your perilous security trouble you! May this first glimpse which has been shown you of your misery lead you to search the Word of God for an authority more conclusive,

and to which I wish to refer you; well persuaded that reason can do nothing but prepare the heart, and that God has reserved it to His Spirit "to convince of sin." Hear this voice, of which we read on every page. "The voice of God, and not of man," will, little by little, reveal to you the unutterable disorder of your affections, and will teach you to see yourselves to be such as God sees you. Here you will discover in those defects, which seem to you little things, offences against the Divine Majesty for which your blood cannot atone; in the thoughts, which seem to you so innocent to-day, mysteries of iniquity; in the conduct, which your conscience to-day approves, sins in disguise—in a word, no longer look at yourselves in your natural darkness, but in the pure light of God, and, so far from doubting that you are sinners, you will scarcely believe there was ever a time in your life when you have been ignorant of it.

Do not fear the severity with which the gospel judges you. The gospel, while it condemns your real state with which the world contents you, gives you to understand that you are called back to a grandeur of which the world has no conception, and that you may recover it. It decides you sinful only because it would make you holy; it would not prove you poor except to give you all things. The condemnation which it pronounces upon you is only the sign of that deliverance which it has in reserve, and of which one has said everything when he has only mentioned Thy name, O Jesus! that is, *Saviour!*

Yes, great God! who now bringest low that thou mayest lift up; who now disturbest that thou mayest comfort; who doth now disquiet us that thou mayest establish our goings, we accept the sentence of our condemnation. We accept it with repentance and sorrow, but with thankfulness and hope, as the token of our deliverance. We hide nothing of our disorder. Shed abroad in our hearts thy clear light, that we may see ourselves as we are. May this sight awaken in all this assembly at once a cry of surprise and anguish which shall rend the atmosphere of indifference with which we are surrounded—a cry which shall reach Thee and move Thy fatherly heart; so that, utterly renouncing all our self-righteousness; humbled, and not only humbled, but believing; and not only believing, but yielding ourselves unreservedly to Thy love, we may emerge from this abyss of our own misery into the unfathomable depths of Thy mercy. Amen.

Aaron's Death---Life's Review; a Plea for Earnest Self-Examination.*

A SERMON

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IN BONN, GERMANY.

(Translated by A. C. Wedekind, D.D.)

And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor: and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son: and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there. And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and they went up into Mount Hor, in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron died there in the top of the mount; and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for Aaron thirty days, even all the house of Israel.—Num. xx: 23-29.

HERE are disclosed to us "the last scenes" of an honored servant of God, one of Israel's princes. In compliance with God's command, Aaron ascends Mount Hor with all his pontifical robes still upon him. Arrived at the mountain's top, Moses strips him of these sacred vestments, one by one, and puts them upon Eleazar, his son and successor in office. Poorer and still poorer in external adornments becomes the aged servant of God, whose head has been silvered by the frosts of 123 winters, until he stands there entirely stripped, and can adopt Job's pathetic declaration: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I go hence: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord."—Job i: 21. Peradventure, a glance backward to the wilderness, the scene of so much toil in the nearly forty years' wanderings; a glance forward to the promised land, which he cannot enter because of his disobedience at the waters of Meribah; a glance and a sigh upward to the God of mercy, and all is over; gently and without a struggle he passes to the "great beyond," and is gathered to his fathers. Says the text, "And Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there." "Gathered to his people," to a reunion with the patriarchal fathers that had already preceded him, and whose personal identity and continued existence is here so mildly and yet so hopefully indicated for the comfort of all true servants of God.

Who shall tell what all passed through Aaron's mind at the

* This sermon was delivered at the end of the university's summer session in 1876. The manuscript, after careful revision, was recently forwarded to this country by Dr. Christlieb for publication.

retrospect of his eventful life? The man that has had an opportunity to glance into the soul's condition of departing saints knows that often, to one or another in his last lucid moments, his whole life has passed in review before his soul, and which, with all its lights and shadows, sins and mercies, hopes and fears, has stood out like a picture set in a heavy ebony frame, from which his own guilt and God's pardoning grace have glared and glistened upon him. It is like a preliminary judgment which a man in such a moment can pass upon himself; and well is it for him then, when all else sinks from his grasp, or vanishes from his view, that in his soul has firmly anchored the immovable conviction that "where sin abounded, grace hath much more abounded."

Beloved, when we at last must enter this solemn hour and hear the summons, "Thou shalt gather thyself unto thy people and die," and when the pilgrim's staff drops from our hand, *can we then calmly address ourselves to the final review of our lives?* Do we now gather for such a review, whether it be here or hereafter, such things which we can take with us with comfort as the fruit of our lives, to be revealed at the judgment seat of Christ? Of the spiritual fruits of life it cannot be said, what is recorded of earthly possessions and worldly honors, or, as here of Aaron's children, "*We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out,*" but only what we have obtained by labor, conflict, prayer, victory—or else have lost by neglect, trifling, indifference and unbelief; yea, the sum total of our conduct must go over into eternity, in order that it may be revealed on the day of the Lord, either for our everlasting joy or shame.

I have thought that it would make our final reckoning much easier if now already, whilst our seed-time and work-day still last, we would diligently examine ourselves and our work. At the close of each important division of our life-work, at the end of each week or year, we are reminded of this duty. Our position to-day is not unlike that of a traveler who has reached some quiet nook for rest, from which he gladly looks back on the road already traversed, and forward to the goal for which he is aiming. Our text, like a two-armed finger-board, points in both these directions. We see Aaron on Mount Hor confronting "man's last enemy," and our thoughts put on naturally a self-inspecting tendency.

Let me then place before you

GOD'S SERVANT IN THE ACT OF BEING GATHERED TO HIS FATHERS.

He suggests the double inquiry :

I. *What am I gathering for life's final revision?*

II. *What shall I have gathered when that revision comes?*

And Thou, Lord of life and death, who so graciously and

patiently hast helped us hitherto, help Thou us, whilst it is called to-day, to gather and to work with Thee, and not to scatter, in order that when we stand on the confines of life and death we may be enabled cheerfully to say: "*I have desire to depart and be with Christ.*" Amen.

1. What am I gathering for life's final review? This may appear more evident to us if, for a moment, we imagine ourselves in Aaron's position. "*And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor by the coast of the land of Edom, saying, Aaron shall be gathered unto his people: for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against my word at the water of Meribah. Take Aaron and Eleazar his son, and bring them up unto Mount Hor.*" What thoughts must this command have awakened in Aaron's mind! Let us transfer ourselves for a moment into this scene.

Nearly midway of the Idumæan mountains, and almost equi-distant from the Dead Sea on the north and the Red Sea on the south, tower the two horns of Mount Hor, 4,000 feet above all other peaks of this chain, lifting their bleak walls and rugged cones majestically to the skies. Thither point the passing Bedouins with great reverence, and sacrifice a lamb as a memorial of Aaron. Here, on the eastern peak, if tradition is to be believed, Israel's first high priest breathed out his last. On this lordly summit stands to-day a white building, said to have been erected over Aaron's tomb. From this point sweeps the eye westward and southward over "that great and terrible wilderness" (Deut. i: 19) of Paran, the northerly and most frightful position of the Sinaitic peninsula. Covered with dark flint and masses of pebble of a deep purple, and stretching farther than the eye can reach, this desert looks black as night. Not a tree, nor a shrub, scarcely a blade of grass relieves the aching eye; only here and there is this sombre rock-ocean broken by a vein of white chalk-stone, resembling the streaks of lightning breaking through a black storm cloud. Far down to the southern extremity the eye espies, through the murky atmosphere, the still easily recognizable mountain-altar of Sinai—that majestic, head-like summit, with its perpendicular rock-walls, its torn, jagged peaks that rise abruptly to the height of 9,000 feet, like a lonely shrine which God honored for a while as the place of His special revelation, and which stands there like a stern witness, lifting its warning hand aloft to remind all Israel of the holy covenant there made with God. And directing the view northward, the straining eye can barely discern the outlines of the most elevated points of the promised land.

If this was the spot on which Aaron should be gathered to his fathers, then, indeed, was it most fitly chosen. Silent and with-

out complaint Aaron obeys the divine command. Conducted by Moses and Eleazar he commences to ascend the mountain in full pontifical attire, embracing the white surplice, the hyacinthine-colored and curiously-wrought ephod, the sacred "breast-plate of judgment" with its mysterious Urim and Thummim, and the mitre with its enveloping golden diadem. There remains only for Aaron this last effort and his life work is done. And as on that lordly summit he reviews his life, what remembrances could he gather from it, what fruits had it yielded?

A whole century lay between him and his youth. And as he looked back over that one hundred years, what above everything else must have stood out most prominently to his view? *The goodness and faithfulness of God.* There must have loomed up before him the merciful preservation of his infant life from Pharaoh's cruel mandate; the enslaved, now liberated, condition of his people; the divinely ordained meeting of his brother Moses on his return from the wilderness, whose spokesman he should become in the presence of Pharaoh to induce him to let his people go; the mighty hand of God that slew Egypt and spared Israel; the miraculous deliverance at the Red Sea; the journey through the wilderness with its countless evidences of God's help in need—all, all reminded Aaron of the superabounding goodness and faithfulness of God! There spread out before him the wilderness, for nearly forty long years the bearer of manna—the silent witness of so many special favors of God to Israel—the theatre of His incessant care for His people; yonder rose *Sinai*, where God had so impressively disclosed His unapproachable holiness—where He had chosen Aaron and his family to the dignity of the high priesthood, and subsequently attested this choice by the bestowment of the mysterious budding rod, through which God had so often protected him and his brother against the haughty, contentious and rebellious people. Truly, this review of his life, whether he looked at things near or remote, could not otherwise than make Aaron's soul overflow with praise and thanksgiving to God for mercies so great and blessings so abundant, and induce him to say, "Hitherto the Lord has helped"—none of His promises have failed, nor will that one remain unfulfilled that will secure His people their long-sought possession.

But there lay the wilderness, too, as a witness of his *sins and weaknesses*. There towered *Sinai*, at whose base this gentle, conciliatory man had *cast the golden calf* that made Israel to sin; there, too, his two sons, Nadab and Abihu, had afterward so suddenly died for offering strange fire on the Lord's altar, whom the stricken parent dared not even mourn in recognition of the righteous judgment of God; there stretched out the desert, where, with Miriam, his sister, *he had planned the sedi-*

tion against Moses on account of the latter's marriage to an Ethiopian woman; but where especially he, with Moses, had committed the *grievous offence at Meribah* which excluded him from the promised land, and spread for his silvered head, now and here, a flinty stone on which to retire to his final rest. This is emphasized in God's last message—the death warrant sent to him and Moses: "*Aaron shall be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the children of Israel, because ye (an intimation to Moses that Nebo is not very far away from Hor, and that he too, for the same offence, cannot reach that land) rebelled against My Word at the water of Meribah.*" Oh, how righteous, how just, how minutely exacting in the punishment of sin must God have stood here before Aaron's soul! How must, in that solemn moment, the sins of his life, with all their sufferings and calamities in this wilderness, have marshaled themselves before his soul and forced him to cry out: "*Lord, Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgive iniquity, transgression and sin*" (Ex. xxxiv : 6, 7).

Truly, a review here of a most eventful life! And if now for a moment thou imaginest thyself in Aaron's place, what hast thou in prospect of death *hitherto gathered* for the final revision of thy life? Beyond all peradventure, we all concur in the double acknowledgment that our lives, too, from tenderest infancy up, have been full of the goodness and mercy, the faithfulness and helpfulness of our God. Journeying through this wilderness world with its wearisomeness and trials, we feel at each station, at the completion of every laudable undertaking, to "thank God and take courage," and to exclaim this day: "Hitherto the Lord has helped us." But have we always been true to our high and holy vocation? Over thy head at the baptismal covenant was pronounced, Sacred to the Lord! Have sacred thoughts been always harbored there? Through that ordinance thou too wast incorporated as a member of "the royal priesthood, the holy nation." Hast thou always thought and acted in a priestly manner? Precious names have been engraved on thy breast-plate and bound upon thy heart. Hast thou always in thy intercessory prayers remembered them and all God's people, and set before them a godly example? And when thy people around thee have defiled their garments by neglecting or rejecting God's holy commandments, has the snowy whiteness of thy priestly robe never been stained? (Rev. iii : 4.) The Urim and Thummim have also been entrusted to thee in the word and spirit of God, to consult Him in all thine undertakings and to be guided in all thy ways. Hast thou continued in these sacred precincts so that He became wisdom and power unto thee in all thy doings? Ah, my brethren, have we indeed gathered aught that will survive our earthly existence as abiding fruit?

Let me ask *childhood*, so often overtaken by death, what hast thou gathered into thy short span of existence? Nothing but play and amusement; or also loving obedience to parents? Have thy lips learned the sweet accents of prayer, and is there within thee a growing attachment to Him who so gently suffered the little children to come unto Him and promised them "the kingdom of heaven?"

And thou, *young man or maiden*, what would pass before thine eye as the sum of thy life? If the Lord should break the fresh and blooming shell of thy life and lay open the inner kernel of thy being what would come to view? What has accumulated within the shrine of thy heart? Hopes and wishes, acquirements and skill for this life only; an insane thirst simply to please men and attain their approbation? Or, with all thy gladsome ardor and youthful enthusiasm, hast thou also cultivated a serious aspect of life, which has early taught thee to keep in view its exalted destiny, and with spiritual weapons to contend "against youthful lusts which war against the soul"? Hast thou, through the humility of an earnest faith, conquered the vanity of knowledge and the idolatry of man-worship? Or art thou still in Egypt—still hankering after the flesh-pots of this world? Have ye "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"? As ye cast a glance upon the recent past, know ye something of fidelity in little things? If ye take your measurement according to Christ's word, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much," are ye not probably lacking in both? Do not countless neglects already accuse your short lives? How many are ready to strike their sails before serious obstacles! Whatever glides not along easily and smoothly, but requires earnest thought and persevering application, is by multitudes at once dismissed. Is not this also unfaithfulness and culpable weakness?

And we, *of riper years and greater age*, how is it with us? Our lives are indeed full of God's numberless mercies and blessings, yet "the cup of thanksgiving is mingled with saddening tears." For how many temptations, dangers and storms of life have left their stings behind! How many divine commands have either been wholly neglected or but partially executed, our conduct being determined more by a regard for our own situation than the honor and glory of God! How many a dissension, even with our nearest kindred, casts its gloomy shadow over our lives! How often has our deference to others' views and wishes betrayed us into a wrong course or made others to sin! When confronted with a clamorous tumult have we bravely stemmed the storm, or like Aaron suffered ourselves to be swept along with the stream? Ah! how many humbling recollections of sins like or even worse than Aaron's have we gathered! He saw only the

morning's dawn of God's kingdom; we live in the full blaze of its noonday sun. Has now the more glorious revelation of God in Christ Jesus influenced us so as to walk always in its light, to devote our energies to its extension, and, prompted by the love of Christ and the "will of God, to so serve our own generation" that when the summons comes: "Thou shalt be gathered unto thy people and die," we can hear that summons without alarm? Or have our aims and wishes, our words and deeds been only from and for beneath, so that when the final reckoning comes we could wish that most of them were not at all or were greatly different? Will what you have gathered be a memorial to your honor or to your everlasting disgrace? Have you with the Lord gathered, or without Him only scattered?

Look once more upon Aaron. Moses shall lead him and his son Eleazar to Mount Hor: "*And strip Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar his son, and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people and shall die there. And Moses did as the Lord commanded: and they went up into Mount Hor in the sight of all the congregation. And Moses stripped Aaron of his garments and put them upon Eleazar his son.*" Behold this little group in the awe-inspiring stillness on the mountain's summit. For miles no soul is near; only the eye of God is upon them. Moses, the younger, but, as God's prophet, now more honorable brother, begins to take the mitre from the elder brother's brow, the breast-plate from his bosom, the ephod from his shoulders and the white surplice from his body, and puts them all on Eleazar. Increasingly poorer and humbler becomes the dying man, until he stands there at last, externally, like every other mortal. How death levels all earthly distinctions and makes high and low alike!

And when, dear hearer, thou shalt at last arrive at eternity's portals, and there perceive that before the holy Judge nothing mere human shall stand which our only Mediator has not consecrated, cleansed and sanctified by His Spirit, then will the mitre of wisdom drop from thy brow, the honors of the world and the frontlets of genius sink into the dust as nothing worth, if tainted with selfishness or corroded with pride; then will the glittering breast-plate of human ambition with which the carnal heart girded itself for so many years be untied and its delusive dreams, so fondly cherished, vanish into air; then will the surplice of good works, upon which the eye so confidently lingered, be stripped off, if wrought only for the pleasement of men and not from love to the Master. Yea, then will every fruit of life sink irrecoverably out of sight whose root is not found in genuine faith "and love unfeigned" as the product of the Holy Ghost; then will be made manifest to many a one who had hoped to have gathered a great deal, that "*Whosoever gathereth*

not with Me scattereth abroad." Oh, poor soul that then finds nothing else at life's final revision but what must remain behind—and accuse it!

Thus, then, our first question, *What am I gathering?* naturally leads to the

II. *What should I have gathered when life's final revision comes?*

This too we learn from the dying priest's history on Hor's summit. Now, what God demanded of him and of all His people was *uncompromising fidelity to his covenant with the Almighty*. This one point includes all others. And despite the many weaknesses and sins Aaron had always, through the Divine mercies and discipline, returned to the Lord, and had yielded such fruits that Heaven's benedictions could abidingly rest on them. He had never refused to accompany Moses to the vacillating Pharaoh; had with prayer upheld his brother's hand in the battle with the Amalekites; had retained and executed the office into which God's free choice had placed him and his house unto the end; and when, after the destruction of Korah and his band, the people murmured against him and Moses, and the plague broke out among them and thousands had already perished, then Aaron, like a true priest, with the atoning censer in hand, flung himself into the breach and nobly used his prerogatives as High Priest in his intercessory prayers for the rebellious people, standing like a breastwork of protection "between the living and the dead until the plague was stayed." Yes, his life contained imperishable fruits—deeds of faith, of love and of trust in God.

He can, therefore, at life's final review gather from it not only the memorials of God's fidelity and of his own failings, but *that* also what, through God's grace and discipline, he has become; gather the fruits of his faith, his love, his hope and his trust in God. And leaning on the Divine promises—perhaps his mind's-eye glancing upward to that greater High Priest who should atone for the sins of the whole world, and whose office his own had but prefigured—*he can close his eyes in peace*. Upward, not downward, does he go in his death. Though privileged to see the promised land only at a distance, his end was assuredly in peace and reconciliation with God—albeit that his life-history had been a stormy one, full of toils, sufferings and chastisements. Calmly submissive to God's holy but most gracious decree, deprived of his outward priestly robes, yet retaining the inward priestly adornments of peace and hope, of trust and humble resignation to the Divine will—thus is he gathered to his fathers, and permitted, without a protracted struggle, to pass away. He had not lived in vain; following the wise guidance of God he had brought forth fruit, and therefore his name was held in

blessed remembrance among the people. "*And Aaron died there in the top of the mount: and Moses and Eleazar came down from the mount. And when all the congregation saw that Aaron was dead, they mourned for him thirty days, even all the house of Israel.*"

Here, then, you too may learn what you ought to gather for life's final revision. Before all else certainly *that one and only support and comfort* in life and death, which the first answer of a well-known catechism holds up to us, "That with body and soul . . . we should not be our own, but belong to our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ." That is the *sure foundation*, the high rock of faith on which we ought to stand when life draws to its close. There should we be clothed with the priestly garments of salvation, which will forever cover our nakedness, even with the righteousness of that High Priest who changes no more, since "by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

And with this divine power—this new life-power of faith, mercy and peace in God—you ought to labor and *gather fruit* from works wrought in God, which aid, amid the various positions and vocations, in the up-building of the future of God's people who, by word and deed, prayer and example co-operate in the development of Christ's kingdom, and which works, therefore, follow those who die in the Lord, in order that at the judgment day they may be revealed to the honor of God and His children.

You ought to gather fruits, too, from all the experiences of your lives, whether elevating or depressing, and hold them fast in your last hour with that calm submission to God which grows out of a humble trust in the Almighty and a careful observance of all the leadings and changes of your lives, since, as disciplinary and merciful, they are always designed to confirm this one great truth, "God doeth all things well."

And, finally, you ought to gather from all these things a *sure hope, a happy prospect* of your future inheritance—of reunion with all the fathers and brethren in Christ—of those "green pastures" where the Chief Shepherd leads His flock, where there is neither a Red Sea nor a Dead Sea, but "a sea clear as crystal," where flows the river of life, on whose margin grow the trees of life; where beckon you not the black surface of the wilderness, but the lightsome plains of immortality; not the burning desert, but the bowers of Eden; not the bleak and barren wastes of Paran, but the fields of living green of Paradise. You ought to be able to say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth;" "I have fought a good fight"—have gathered for the hour of my departure mercy and peace, faith and hope—"henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

Oh, dear brethren, whoever of you desires at last to depart in peace, and calmly to review not only this or that division of concluded labor, but his whole life, let him diligently and frequently institute such reckoning days, and work while it is day, sowing and gathering in faith what in that solemn hour he will wish that he could gather. We all ascend, as it were, step by step, with the seeds of death in our bosom, the mountain for life's last revision—some farther advanced, others farther back. Life's way leads to death's summit. The higher the ascent the farther the outlook. But not all obtain the blessed view, like Moses on Mount Nebo, of the promised land. If we have gathered nothing abiding, nothing satisfying, then will thick mist, or even black thunder-clouds, veil our goal. If, however, on the other hand, we have gathered with Christ, then "at evening time it shall be light" for us.

Blessed is that soul at whose review of life *faith issues into vision*, which suffers itself willingly to be stripped of all earthly things, since it desires to depart and be with Christ and be gathered to the people of the Lord, and which can say on the confines of the wilderness and Canaan, of life and death—"I am both thy pilgrim and thy citizen." Amen.

The False Light. A Reply to Canon Farrar's Sermon on Eternal Punishment.

A SERMON

PREACHED BY Justin D. Fulton, D.D.

We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.—2 Peter i: 19.

A gentleman was walking on the coast of Calais, and drew near the lighthouse famed throughout the world for its revolving light. Seeing the lighthouse-keeper, he said to him, "Suppose your light should go out?" "That light go out? That light never is permitted to go out." "Yes; but suppose it should?" "Suppose it should? Look out on that stormy sea! It is full of ships going up and down the coast—some starting for India, some for America. If that light should go out we would hear of shipwrecks and disasters for months and months to come. No, sir, that light cannot go out. I never go up to kindle it but I think of the eyes that will be turned toward it in anxiety all over the world. There are thousands safe on the great sea to-night because I do my duty." Canon Farrar has not this joy. In England, in America, and wherever the words of the preacher have gone, souls are going down into the night of an eternal hell because of the false light this man has kindled. He has covered, to the best of his ability, the light burning in the world's lighthouse with his surplice, designing to obscure the radiance of the gospel, and pursuing a course that will make sinners rejoice in a false security while Christians mourn. The traveler, before he starts on a journey, studies the guide-book. The navigator, before he begins a voyage over an unknown sea, examines his chart that he may know where lie the dangers to be shunned and the path of safety to be followed. What would be thought of a man who should throw discredit upon the guide-book and cause the navigator to lose faith in the chart? At this time, as never before, attention is called to the Word of God, which contains the chart of the future. In it we learn what is the condition of the soul in the world beyond the grave and of the doom ever hanging over the wicked. The story of Dives and Lazarus proves that the soul lives after the body dies; that it does not sleep; that it is conscious. The soul of the righteous finds rest in Paradise; the soul of the wicked finds trouble, anguish and painful forebodings of a judgment to come in the under

world. Hell begins immediately after the death of the body, because then the disguises of sin are removed, the spirit beholds facts in their true light. Dives in hell, or in Hades, saw that his rejection of truth was a fearful mistake, and so he prayed that Lazarus might be sent to warn his brothers of their peril.

It is not pleasant to contemplate the conduct of Rev. F. W. Farrar, D.D., Canon of Westminster, in Westminster Abbey, who discredits this statement and makes light of this cry of agony. The place where the Canon preaches is celebrated more for being the sepulchre of English kings, statesmen, poets, historians, novelists and artists than for any audiences that can find a place to gather in any of the small chapels that surround the East End. The abbey was commenced in the seventh century, and was completed in 1245. It is a part of English history. Canon Farrar preaches there. The position gives a weight to his words which do not belong to them. His audiences are necessarily small and insignificant in character. The preacher won reputation by his admirable Life of Christ. It is pitiable that he should throw it away by pandering to the worst uses of infidelity. "Canon Farrar," says John Hall, D.D., "is not disciplined in the accuracy of logical thinking." This is, no doubt, a correct estimate of the man, as all will see before we are through with him.

ERROR ITS SOURCE OF POPULARITY.

The question is asked, Why has his sermon received so wide a circulation? Because of its errors. Those who fear hell are in the majority. Any words from a minister claiming to be orthodox, who denies the existence of hell, are read with delight by those who will not go to Christ. In our own land there was a reaction against the time-honored power of the gospel of Christ, which has been the sheet-anchor of a world's hope in the past, and which is holding men fast in its terrible grip at this hour. In New England a Congregational minister avowed his universalism. Soon it was claimed that the Congregationalists were going over to the enemy. A president of a New England college and men well known in the Christian world gave their endorsement to error rather than make trouble. They permitted the true light to be moved out of its place, and introduced a false light to lead astray voyagers over life's stormy sea. Satan and his emissaries praised them. Then came Canon Farrar's sermon: he was called the Canon of Westminster. The most we know in America of Westminster is that the Westminster Catechism originated there. The cry went up, "The foundations are giving way." Error flies around the world, while truth is getting on its boots. Errorists will buy error. Lovers of truth believe in God, and don't

think it necessary to give wing to the antidote to the poison. Again, the sermon was weighed and found wanting in scholarship, in argument as in facts. Many believed it was a harmless affair, and said, "It is but a nine-days' wonder; the storm will soon blow over; the least said the soonest mended." So it would have been had not the enemy been disposed to sow tares while the Church tried to sleep. One fact is apparent.

THE CHURCH ASLEEP.

A live devil lives in this world, and gets a good deal more help out of good ministers and out of good laymen than would be given him if all remembered the apostolic injunction, "Fight the good fight of faith," and that the Church of God was ever to be kept on a war footing. "For to us the contest is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against the spiritual powers of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all to stand."

The locality of the abbey is not favorable to securing a large and intelligent congregation; it is surrounded by the poorer class. The Canon, in this sermon, describes them: "Walk at night in squalid purlieus, not far even from this abbey, where glaring gin-palaces are busy, and amid the reek of alcohol you may hear snatches of foul oaths and odious songs—streets where women sit shuddering in wretched garrets, to think of the brutal hands that will strike, of the brutal feet that will kick them when the drunkard staggers home; and where the young lads of the schools, upon which we spend so many millions of money, are being daily ruined and depraved by being lured into low haunts of gambling and degradation; or walk, again, in the thronged haunts of commerce, where myriads are utterly and recklessly absorbed in that hasting to be rich which shall not be innocent; or, judge from the stage and the opera, that vice in higher places is none the less dangerous because it is more gilded and perfumed." . . . "Alas! the vast majority of men and women whom we see are not saints, but sinners, and too often contented with their sins, and living in their sins; and covetousness, and drunkenness, and lust, and lying, and dishonesty and hatred, claim each their multitudes of votaries and of victims." A few Sabbaths previous he had preached a sermon about heaven. In view of these facts, the preacher imagines his people asking him, in their ignorance, not to tell them about heaven, but about the condition of the lost. This sermon on Eternal Punishment, preached in the midst of the direst poverty and most abject ignorance of London, gives professedly the opinion of scholarship regarding the condition of the wicked who die without God and with-

out hope in the world. He then ridicules the popular notion of hell, saying: "Many of us were scared with it in our childhood. It is, that the moment a human being dies, at whatever age, under whatever disadvantages, his fate is sealed hopelessly and forever: and that if he die in unrepented sin, that fate is a never-ending agony, amid physical tortures the most frightful that can be imagined; so that when we think of the future of the human race, we must conceive of a vast and burning prison in which the lost souls of millions writhe and shriek forever, tormented in a flame that never will be quenched."

Now, we admit that the description conforms to the teachings of Scripture. It paints the second death in none too glaring colors. There might be differences of opinion whether the Scriptures teach that the sinner goes at once to this place of torment after death, but we do not care to engage in that discussion at this time. God's Word declares unequivocally, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."—Ps. ix: 17. "The Son of man will send forth His angels, and they will gather out of His kingdom all the causes of offence, and those who do iniquity, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there will be the wailing and the gnashing of teeth."—Matt. xiii: 41, 42. "And the devil who misleads them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where are also the beast and the false prophet; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."—Rev. xx: 10. "He that overcomes shall inherit these things; and I will be to him a God and he shall be to me a son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and defiled with abominations, and murderers, and fornicators, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all the liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."—Rev. xxi: 7, 8. "The way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath."—Prov. xv: 24. "Therefore hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure; and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it."—Is. v: 14. These and kindred passages furnish scriptural authority for what Canon Farrar calls the popular notion concerning hell. *These miserable devices* Canon Farrar repudiates as "crude and ghostly travesties of the holy and awful will of God. I arraign them as mercilessly ignorant. I impeach them as a falsehood against Christ's universal and absolute redemption." Let us not be mistaken. Canon Farrar does this. He puts his *ipse dixit* against God's Word, and there in Westminster Abbey he denounces them as a "blasphemy against God's exceeding and eternal love."

HUMAN ARROGANCE.

The arrogance of the man is noteworthy. He says:

"But I would ask you to believe, my brethren, that I speak now not with natural passion, but with the most accurate theological precision, when I say that though texts may be quoted which give *prima facie* plausibility to such modes of teaching, yet, to say nothing of the fact that the light and love which God Himself has kindled within us, recoil from them, those texts are, in the first place, alien to the broad, unifying principles of Scripture; that in the next place they are founded on interpretations demonstrably groundless; and, in the third place, that for every one so quoted two can be adduced on the other side." Here, then *we reach the position of Canon Farrar*. Let us bring before us in distinctness his positions. The first is, that the doctrine of hell is alien to the broad and unifying principles of Scripture. That is, if we understand him, the doctrine of hell might be dropped out of the Scripture and yet the purpose and plan, and the persuasive power of the Scriptures to induce men to turn from sin to righteousness, from error to truth, from Satan to Christ, would not be impaired. Here the Canon in Westminster kindles a wrecker's light on the lee-shore and invites his poor and untaught hearers to turn from the path marked out on the chart of eternal life, to the rocks and treacherous shoals of unbelief, when loss becomes a certainty and death a possibility. If you can drop out hell from the Scripture you can surely drop out heaven. If you can drop out these and not impair the value of the Scriptures, you may drop out Christ and the cross, God and the gift of His Son. Let God answer Canon Farrar. In the last of the last chapter of Revelation I find these words, and commend them to the Canon and his hearers: "I testify to every one that hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if any one shall add to them God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any one shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written of in this book."

Canon Farrar protests against the "ignorant tyranny of isolated texts." In this way he deceives his hearers again. There is no tyranny in isolated texts. The fact remains after eighteen centuries, that the Scriptures stand or fall as a unity and as a particularity. From the first page of Genesis to the last of Revelation, Scripture sustains isolated texts, and isolated texts furnish sure supports to Scriptural teaching. There is no other book like it. The Lord Jesus is "*the way, the truth and the life* to all." As well might a man say you could not judge of a cable by a single link as to declare you cannot judge Scripture by a single text. Break one link and you ruin the cable and permit the ship with its wealth of life and treasure to go upon the lee-shore. Better the teaching of the Ro-

man Catholic pulpit, which declares that the doctrine of eternal punishment "is necessary to preserve the sanctity of the divine law." In this matter there is no liberty. "The Catholic must believe in order to be saved, and if he rejects one single article of faith he rejects all." This is as true of Protestants as of Catholics. The Word of God is the religion of Protestants. This is the standard of conscience and for conscience, to the law and to the testimony, This teaches that there is a hell, that it is a locality, and that it is a prison into which the wicked are cast: where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Just as the life of the good is eternal in heaven, so the life of the evil is eternal in hell. Hence it is that a highway passes within reach of all, called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it, but it shall be for those, the wayfaring men, though fools need not err therein.

As we intimated at the outset, this sermon is one long and malignant attempt to presume upon the ignorance of his hearers. It could not have been addressed to audiences like those to which William Landels, John Cummings or Charles H. Spurgeon preach. He says that it is impossible to get a correct conclusion without going "to the inspired original and not to the erroneous translations." Here again he is guilty of deceiving the people. He knows, and every other student of Hebrew and Greek understands, that the revisers of King James's version translated correctly those terms meaning "hell" and "forever," and that there have been no changes in the language since that time which would to any degree modify the positions then taken and now maintained. But even if it were necessary to go to the inspired originals the world would not be left in night. Thousands and tens of thousands are able to go to the inspired originals. The words *αἰών* and *αἰώνιος* are easily translated. Any one can obtain, and so avail themselves of the best scholarship of the world as displayed in the revision of the New Testament published by the American Bible Union, and can find there a perfect translation of the inspired originals. Some fault has been found with the rendering of the Greek into Greek idioms rather than into the language of the common people. But no one has been able to prove that the translation was not as perfect as it is possible to translate the words of one language into those of another. In Matt. xxv: 46, we find *Καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*. "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into everlasting life." It is here perceived that the same Greek word describes the perpetuity of punishment and the perpetuity of life. In Rev. xx: 10 *αἰών* is used again, where we read they shall be tormented day and night forever and for-

ever; literally, in the Greek, to the everlasting of the everlasting. In these utterances, in the Greek or in the English, the sense which originally belonged to them still adheres to them, and so it is not true, as Canon Farrar falsely asserts, that "*there are a thousand notions associated with them which did not originally belong to them.*"

A STRANGE QUESTION.

The Canon asks the question : "Where would be the popular teachings about hell if we calmly and deliberately erased from our English Bible the three words 'damnation,' 'hell' and 'everlasting'?" Should I be permitted to answer him, I would reply : The popular teachings would be just where they were before Canon Farrar should do so worthless and foolish a thing. As well might a man ask where would be the law of gravitation if he should jump off the Brooklyn bridge into the East River? With all due respect we should say the law would be where it was before. The more important question for the man to ask is, not where would be the law of gravitation, but where would he be? A man might as well attempt to blot out the sun by the shadow of his hand, or chain the seasons and keep winter from changing into spring by a wisp of straw, as to attempt to blot out the words "hell," "damnation" and "everlasting" from God's Bible. Man did not make the Bible; man cannot control it. The Word of God endureth forever, and man or men are but as the dust of the balance. Canon Farrar tried to blot them out. He said in his peculiarly modest way, as though wisdom was to die with him, "I say unhesitatingly—I say, claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge—I say with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility—I say, standing here, in the sight of God and of my Saviour—that not one of these words ought to stand any longer in our English Bibles, and that being, in our present acceptation of them, simply mistranslations, they most unquestionably will not stand in the revised version of the Bible if the revisers have understood their duty."

Well, what has been the result? About the same as if Canon Farrar had jumped from London bridge into the Thames. There has been a noise, and nothing but noise. The devil knows when to print, and so this sermon has gone abroad, and Canon Farrar cries out against the reports when he finds that he is the laughing-stock of every scholar in the world, and he attempts to hide behind the reporters, and say, I did not say that. The trouble is, he did say it and no one believes him. Sitting Bull with his half-starving Indians, squatting on reservations that do not belong to them and issuing decrees against the United States Government; the buffalo confronting the iron horse on his way across the continent and attempting to

destroy the train by projecting himself against it and so being run over and scattered along the track, do not cut a more sorry figure than does this eloquent Canon perched on his historic pulpit, close beside the graves of the dead and in the presence of the living, and demanding that the words "hell," "damnation" and "forever" be left out of the Word of God. We can almost imagine him listening to see if the presses of the British and Foreign Bible Society do not stop. In vain; the clang goes on. We fancy him going over to Bagster & Sons, the eminent publishers of God's Word. The sermon is preached. The edict is gone forth. Do they heed it? No! in Greek and in English the words remain. The Canon is mortified. He has issued his decree, and even his poor impoverished hearers refuse to change their Bibles. They feel, quite likely, as did some of our soldiers on a man-of-war, who had learned of the appointment of a Universalist chaplain. The soldiers and sailors had a conference and went to see him. They asked, "Are you a Universalist?" "I am." "Don't you believe in a hell?" "I do not." "Then won't you please to resign? For the fact is, if there is no hell, we do not need you; and if there is a hell, we do not want to be led astray. We want a minister to preach to us who believes in God's Word as it has been delivered to us." The kind-hearted man gave way to a preacher of the truth. We can imagine some of the more intelligent of Canon Farrar's hearers leaving the dry and empty sepulchre for the rich and luscious pasturage to which Spurgeon, Hall and many more invite their hearers.

THE CANON, AND NOT THE REPORTERS TO BLAME.

The Canon in disgrace finds fault with the reporters. It is a trick not confined to London. He says: "To say that I denounced the doctrine of eternal punishment or expressed the hope that the word *eternal* might not appear in the revised translation, is, as most of your readers will have seen at a glance, utter nonsense." True, he only proposed to leave "hell," "damnation" and "forever" out of the future editions of the Word of God, and so extinguish the light that sheds its blessed radiance over the world. The trouble is, when a man cuts loose from God, he cuts loose from truth, for God is truth. There ought to be for such men some way found of reporting, instead of a man's actual words, the things which after a day or two he will wish he had said.

2. *Notice some of the Canon's assertions.* "The verb to 'damn' in the Greek Testament is neither more nor less than the verb to 'condemn.'" Suppose we admit this assertion, has the Canon explained the difference between damned and condemned. Is there any difference between being condemned to eternal burnings and being damned to eternal burnings?

Does this word condemn affect the burnings or the duration of them? Most assuredly not. The word in our English version (Mark xvi: 16) translated damned may be rendered condemned—it also means punished. Again he says: "The word *αἰώνιος*, translated everlasting, is simply the word which, in its first sense, means 'age long.'" Prof. Boise of the Theological Seminary of Chicago says *αἰών* and its adjective form *αἰώνιος* are used one hundred and ninety-seven times in the New Testament. It is a remarkable fact, which every thoughtful man ought seriously to consider, that this phrase translated forever and ever is predicated alike and without qualification of three ideas. These three ideas are: God's existence; the punishment of the wicked, and the happiness of the righteous. If the Greek word means "age long" for one, it means "age long" for all. This admits all we claim, viz.: that the eternity of happiness and of misery is to be measured by the existence of God, which is from everlasting to everlasting. It is said that "Dean Stanley is in sympathy with Canon Farrar." This defection is not to be wondered at, as Rev. J. M. Pendleton, D.D., wisely remarks, "when we remember that Dean Alford of Canterbury years ago, in his notes on 1 Peter iii: 19, virtually expressed himself in favor of probation after death. Oh, how much mischief may result from one false exposition! Canon Farrar devoutly espouses the doctrine of the everlasting life of the saints; in this he shows either his lack of scholarship or of honesty." For the man "who says that the same Greek adjective, when used in connection with the punishment of the wicked and the life of the righteous, denotes in the former instance temporary, and in the latter endless duration, cannot be trusted as an exegete. He is influenced by feeling, by sentimentalism. Exegesis is not a matter of feeling . . . The trouble with such expositors is, that in the plenitude of their kindly feeling they are influenced to take the side of the devil and of wicked men—against God. This may be thought a hard saying, but I believe it is true; and every man of very large benevolence is in danger on this point."*

HOW HE DOES AWAY WITH HELL.

"And finally, the word rendered hell is in one place the Greek word 'Tartarus,' borrowed as a word for the prison of evil spirits, not after, but before the resurrection. It is in five places 'Hades,' which simply means the world beyond the grave, and it is in twelve places 'Gehenna,' which means primarily the Valley of Hinnom, outside Jerusalem, in which after it had been polluted by Moloch worship, corpses were flung and fires were lit; and, secondly, it is a metaphor not of

* J. M. Pendleton, D.D., in *National Baptist*.

final and hopeless, but of that purifying and corrective punishment which, as we all believe, does await impenitent men both here and beyond the grave."

The first remark we wish to make in regard to this statement, is, *it contains no information*. Every scholar knows that hell in the Greek is in one place called Tartarus, but it was understood then, and is understood now, to be that part of the under world, or Hades, where the souls of the wicked were confined and tormented. The passage is in 2 Peter ii: 4, and reads: "For if God spared not angels, having sinned, but casting them down to Tartarus, delivered them over to chains of darkness reserved unto judgment." Now, every one would understand the idea contained in the word "hell," and every Greek dictionary of authority so translates it. The word "Hades," we are told, is used in five places, and simply means "the world beyond the grave." It is a law of philology that the true definition of a word will make good sense when substituted for the word defined. Insert the words he gives us in Luke xvi: 23, "And in the world beyond the grave he lifted up His eyes, being in torments," do we not reach the same conception with this phrase as we would had we used the word "hell"? which means no more and no less than "the place of the dead, or of souls after death." Is it possible that under the cloak of pretended scholarship the man intends to deceive those who put their trust in him? Again, he repeats, that every scholar knows that gehenna is translated twelve times "hell." And by the law as given above, it is properly translated in each instance.

A FOOLISH PARADE OF SCHOLARSHIP.

The sin of sins in this foolish parade of scholarship is contained in these words: "And, secondly, it (hell) is a metaphor, not of final and hopeless, but of that purifying and corrective punishment which, as we all believe, does await impenitent sinners both here and beyond the grave." "But be it solemnly observed, the Jews to whom and in whose metaphorical sense the word was used by our blessed Lord, never did, either then or at any other period, attach to that word 'gehenna,' which He used, that meaning of endless torment which we have been taught to apply to hell." "To them, and therefore on the lips of our blessed Saviour who addressed it to them, it means not a material and everlasting fire, but an intermediate, a metaphorical and a terminable retribution." William Greenfield, in his definition *Γέεννα*, says: "The valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch, and afterward polluted with every species of filth, as well as the carcasses of animals and dead bodies of malefactors; to consume which, in order to avert the pestilence which such a mass

of corruption would occasion, constant fires were kept burning; hence, hell, the fires of Tartarus, the place of punishment in the under world—Matt. x: 28—xviii: 9, *et al.*” In this definition there is no shade of meaning which warrants the supposition that the punishment was to be corrective or purifying. In Matt. x: 28 Christ says, “Be not afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” And in Matt. xviii: 9 Christ declares “It is better to enter into life with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire,” showing that punishment was in Christ’s mind, not purification, not correction.

HIS CONCLUSIONS.

“Thus, then, finding neither in Scripture nor anywhere anything to prove that the fate of every man is at death irrevocably determined, I shake off the hideous incubus of atrocious conceptions attached by false theology to the doctrine of final retribution.”

We have shown that he has failed to find a single word or passage, an intimation or suggestion pointing to his conclusion. Here he turns from God’s Word to man’s maudlin sentimentalism; and though he does not uphold the Romish doctrine of purgatory nor avow Universalism, he intimates that “the belief that good shall fall at last, far off, yet at last, to all, does, indeed, derive much support from many passages of Scripture” (none of which he quotes); and it, or a view very closely analogous to it, was held by Origen, Gregory of Nyssa, Clement of Alexandria—all of which proves nothing, and is to be turned over to the account of delusion and sham, or a desire to secure the favor of an ungodly world who care not to be plagued with the teachings of the Word of God. As a result, he kindles this false light and leaves it to do its terrible work among those who repose confidence in his teaching: “If any hardened sinner here, shamefully loving his sin and despising the long-suffering of his Saviour, trifle with that doctrine, it is at his own deep and awful peril. But if, on the other hand, there should be souls among you (and are there not?)—souls very sinful, indeed, but not yet hardened in sin; souls that feel, indeed, that ever amid their failing they long, and pray, and love, and agonize, and strive to creep nearer to the light; then to you I say, Have faith in God; there is hope for you—hope for you even if death overtake you before the final victory is won; hope for the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven; hope for the mourners, for they shall be comforted; though you, too, if you should continue in sin, may have to be purified in that gehenna of *αἰώνιος* fire beyond the grave.”

What right has a professed minister of Jesus Christ to use

such language? Is he not acting the part of a traitor to the truth? Men call such preaching the result of liberalism. It is a poor name for a bad product. Such preaching comes from yielding to temptation, and from nothing else. Our Lord said (John iii: 14), "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up; that every one who believes in Him may have everlasting life." Behold the preacher among the poor and lost of London, and saying to them: "Go on in your sinning; if you die in sin it will be burned out of you, I have no doubt, in the gehenna beyond the grave!" Analogy is against him, and he knows it. The fire did not bring the dead back to life. The worm eat them and the fire burned them, but no purified and saved body walked back from the Valley of Hinnom to Jerusalem. There is no way out of hell. It is not a corrective or a purifying establishment; it is a place of punishment; it is the prison-house of the damned. As the tree falls so it lies. Those who get into hell stay in. The filthy are filthy still. Can you imagine Moses pursuing this course with the bitten Israelites? The serpents swarm in the air; they are in the bed; they are on the table; their sinuous forms are felt twining about the limbs; they curl up in the bosom; they look with their bright eyes into the face; their long, lithe tongues protrude from their mouths; they bite; the bitten know their danger. There is death in the camp; there is wailing in the air. Can you think of Moses coming and saying: "Though you are bitten, though death is on your track, be calm; don't think of the serpent lifted up; don't obey God; don't surrender your will, and look and live; but if you die you will go into sheol, where the fire is not quenched, and you may hope for healing there." No! He cried, *Look at God's offering, the brazen serpent!* LOOK AND LIVE. So was it, so is it the Canon's duty and the duty of us all to tell sinners here and now, Look to Jesus Christ and believe in Him, and thou shalt have eternal life. No other way is the right way; no other message is the right message; for they who believe in Jesus Christ have eternal life, and these shall be saved at the last day.

"We have now sure the prophetic word; to which ye do well that ye take heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day star arise in your hearts."

1. Let us act as if we believed it. The battle at this hour is waging on the old field. It is an attempt to do away with the prophetic word; they desire to break its power. The Canon finds no warrant in Scripture, and so turns to men. Let us from men turn to God. This light has shed its radiance on unnumbered voyagers; and whoever has welcomed it and been guided by it has been brought into the harbor safely. "In Christ is life, and His life is the light of men. He was in the

world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not. He came unto His own and His own received Him not; but as many as received Him to them gave He power to become children of God, even to them that believed on His name, who were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

2. *Take heed, as to a lamp shining in a dark place.* There is spiritual night over all the earth. Without Christ it is rayless gloom. Outside of Christ there is no eye to pity, no arm to save. Then came the Gospel, the blessed evangel of hope to the earth-born race. To all lands and to all climes the words of Christ have gone, "I have come a light into the world, that whoever believes in me may not abide in the darkness." There is no need of the sinner's groping in gloom: the light of the world is Jesus.

"Come to the light, 'tis burning for thee—
Sweetly the light has dawned upon me.
Once I was blind, but now I can see—
The light of the world is Jesus."

3. *They who believe in Christ shall enjoy the day dawn.*—A brighter day is coming. It is climbing now up the steeps of time. In the near future each of us will behold the great white throne and Him who shall sit upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven shall flee away. Then, sinner, your day of probation will have ended. The dead, great and small, shall stand before God. You are among the dead. For you the books shall be opened, and you shall be judged according to your works, and death and the under world, or those who have gone on before, shall be cast into the lake of fire; for then there is to be no reprieve. The Word of God abideth forever.

4. The day star is shining. It is seen in those who love Christ. Every Christian is a proof of a coming Christ. He is to the morning, that is soon to break over the hills, what the day star is to the coming day—He shines in the light of the Sun of Righteousness.

Sinner, believe me, there is for you safety in Jesus Christ. The hour approaches when the heavens and the earth are to disappear. The new heavens and the new earth shall stand forth in beauty. Then shall the shout arise, "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell there, and they shall be His people, and God with them Himself shall be their God." Then to Him who loves us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom, priests to God and His father, to Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. For those who reject Christ and continue in sin, there is now and forever a fearful "looking forward to of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries." "And I saw a great white throne, and him who sat upon it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away,

and no place was found for them." In other words, the soul is left without a refuge or a hiding-place. Hence the cry to the mountains and to the rocks to fall on them, to hide them from the presence of the saints. The sinner would rather see any object than the Christ who died for him. Then the dead in trespasses and in sins will see their mistake. They believed a lie. They will find that the Word of God is true. The conscience, seared now as with a hot iron, will then be active. The murderer will see his victim. Hell will be a reality. O then, how important that Christ purge our souls of past transgression, and help us for the future to have the answer of a good conscience toward God.

Follow a step further, O sinner. "And death and the under world—all who know not God—are to be cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire." That "lake of fire" is the prison-house of the damned. There is no escape from it. Men say, I cannot believe in the existence of hell. So much the worse for you. Think of your helplessness, whether you believe it or not. There are those who make light of hydrophobia. At length one is bitten. Faith has nothing to do with it now. The virus is in the blood. As a result water cannot be borne. There are spasms frightful to behold. The victim is in the grasp of disease. Sin is disease. It is destructive in its nature. It blinds the eye to the beauties of holiness and to the excellences and merits of Jesus Christ. It causes you to reject the love of Him "who is the chiefest among ten thousand and the one altogether lovely." A young man had committed murder. He was condemned to be hung. He had friends of wealth and influence, whom he believed had power to deliver him. He would not make preparations for death. Indeed, he could not bear to hear an allusion made to death in his presence. At length his mother went to the Governor and asked him if he was going to pardon her boy. The Magistrate replied, "*It is impossible.*" "Then, in God's name, go to him and tell him that he is lost, and that he will be executed at the appointed time." Canon Farrar would have said, had he practiced what he preaches, "Have faith; it will come out right." The Magistrate was a more faithful minister of the law. The Governor went to the prison, took the criminal's hand in his, and told him of his doom. What a horror came upon him! Sinner, you will yet hear your doom pronounced by Him who sits on the "white throne." God will be vindicated, and if your name is not written in the Lamb's book of life you will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the second death. Then look away to Christ, for

There is life for a look at the Crucified One,
 There is life at this moment for thee;
 Then look, sinner, look, unto Him and be saved,
 Unto Him who was nailed to the tree.

